NRA
WE DO OUR PART

The Nation

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BY THE TIME this issue of *The Nation* appears on the newsstands the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution will have been interred in its grave. Looking back over fourteen years of national prohibition, it is probably not an exaggeration to say that it was the worst legislative mistake this country ever made. It was a law that was consistently broken by hundreds of thousands—even millions—of otherwise law-abiding citizens in every State in the Union. Worse than that, it gave rise to an enormous illegal industry whose profits were certainly as large as those of any other single industry and perhaps larger. The evils that the prohibition law engendered were infinitely worse than the admittedly widespread and shocking evils that it sought to prevent. Nor will repeal immediately cure the abuses which we have learned to expect under prohibition. They may not be cured for a generation. Because of the considerable tax that will evidently be placed on liquor, bootlegging will undoubtedly go on, for how long no one can say. The gangster, the racketeer, driven out of the beer and whiskey business, can only turn to some other lucrative form of endeavor. We have taught him that he can live without the law. It is unreasonable to expect that he will be either willing or able to forget speedily a lesson so well learned. Prohibition as a matter of federal law is dead. May it rest in peace! And may the laws that succeed it be more intelligently drawn and more honestly observed!

THE Seventh Pan-American Conference was opened in Montevideo on December 3 with indications that a strong demand would be made by the delegates from both Cuba and Haiti that the United States end its intervention in those countries. The Cubans rightly desire that the United States give up the special rights and responsibilities which it has in the island under the Platt Amendment. The Haitians justly demand the termination of the control which the United States exercises over their financial affairs. In this connection Mr. Roosevelt has just answered a plea from President Vincent of Haiti in a way that shows surprising lack of information or much naivete. Mr. Roosevelt contends that the United States cannot abandon its financial control in Haiti because of "unescapable obligations" to bondholders under a treaty made in 1915, a protocol in 1919, and an agreement last summer. Mr. Roosevelt must write with his tongue in his cheek, for it can hardly be that he is unaware that what he calls a treaty was imposed upon Haiti after our troops had seized the customs house and the Haitian congress had been bludgeoned into accepting our wishes. The protocol of 1919 was ratified by a puppet government when the United States was openly governing the republic, and the agreement of last summer was negotiated with Haiti's Minister of Finance when the legislature was not in session and was known to oppose such a step. The United States has "unescapable obligations" to its honor and to international decency of a far more serious nature than those to the holders of bonds which were based originally on illegitimate claims and have since been supported by shotgun diplomacy.

THE HAPPY FAMILY in Washington continues to be an odd mixture of high-minded idealists, political bosses, and representatives of standpat business, recent additions to the Roosevelt entourage having accentuated rather than lessened the variety of the potpourri. Take, for instance, the excellent appointment of William H. Holly to the federal district bench in Chicago. He has been chairman of the executive committee of the Public Ownership League of America and opposed to everything which the Insulls stood for, he has been the counsel of various labor organizations, and he has served as attorney for the Chicago Civil Liberties Committee, affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union. Mr. Holly may neutralize, if not counteract, the influence on the Chicago bench of Judge Wilkerson, whose promotion was blocked last year because of his anti-labor record, and Judge Woodward, whose recently exposed conduct in receivership cases led the Chicago Bar Association to express public disapproval. Yet on the other hand there is Earle Bailie, recently made special assistant in charge of fiscal affairs by Acting Secretary Morgenthau of the Treasury. As the only practical banker among the higher officers of the department, Mr. Bailie is sure to take part in all important conferences and is likely to play an influential role in the attempt to reshape the securities act, to which he is opposed. His record suggests that he has neither the ability nor the disinterestedness to be a desirable fiscal adviser to

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a progressive Administration. As practically first in command in the firm of J. and W. Seligman and Company for the past ten years, he was instrumental in foisting upon the public a series of dubious loans, now wholly or partly in default, including the notorious $90,000,000 issue of Peruvian bonds, at present selling for about 5 per cent of their face value. This issue was floated against the advice of the company's representative in Peru and obtained by payment of a so-called commission of $415,000 to the son of the Peruvian President—a procedure that would be illegal and probably impossible under the provisions of the securities act to which Mr. Bailie so strongly objects and which he presumably will try to have relaxed.

PRICE-FIXING as a solution of the dairy problem is in difficulties. The tendency of price-fixing is to drive the small, independent distributor out of business. In the past the independents were able to compete with the larger companies only by underselling them in the retail market. This they could do because of their smaller overhead charges. The price-fixing arrangement deprives them of this advantage. In some areas the independents have sought to overcome this difficulty by continuing to sell below the fixed retail price, although at the same time they have been paying the dairy farmer the wholesale price agreed upon. This clearly violates the marketing agreements, although the independents know that with them it is a question of survival. The Agricultural Adjustment Administration seems to have taken the same view, for instead of launching a wholesale prosecution of the small distributers, which could only benefit the National Dairy Products Corporation and other large companies, it has decided to reopen its study of the milk problem. This willingness to confess to error and to seek to rectify it must be heartily applauded. It gives us reason to hope that the spirit of honest experimentation, which President Roosevelt favored a few months ago, but which in recent months he seems to have lost sight of, is still alive in Washington.

FOR THE THIRD TIME Heywood Patterson stood up in an Alabama courtroom and heard a jury pronounce him guilty of rape and fix his punishment at death. This marked the not unexpected close of a trial which had been distinguished for bias on the part of the presiding judge and where the evidence was so slight that the last time it was presented in court another judge declared it inadequate. The Scottsboro defendants have still several chances for life. Their counsel, Samuel S. Leibowitz, has taken steps for an appeal. The case will in all probability go to a higher court and Victoria Price will sit on the witness stand several times more, chewing gum and cheerfully going through—in four-letter Anglo-Saxon words—the story of her "rape" by nine Negroes. One important lesson the Scottsboro trials, which have dragged on for three years and are likely to continue longer, unmistakably teach: the delays in justice which are adduced as justification for lynching may, as often as not, be proper delays for the protection of a person on trial for his life. It is possible, for example, that what a citizen of Maryland's Eastern Shore means when he objects to legal delays is that the courts may have a Negro if they guarantee to hang him quick. Otherwise he might as well be lynched by a mob.

THE HITLER GOVERNMENT has suffered its first internal political defeat. Threatening a split in the Lutheran church, the opposition to the Nazi regime forced the resignation of the Spiritual Ministry of the Evangelical Church, a sort of cabinet for the National Socialist Reichsbishop. The Pastors' Emergency League, organized in opposition to the Nazi German Christian movement, is fighting the church radicalism of the Fascists, which aims at the complete control by the National Socialist Party of the Protestant church, and is opposing the removal of clergymen and church members in whose family trees are traces of un-Aryan ancestry. Among the Nazi dignitaries thus retired were Joachim Hossenfelder, the leader of the German Christian movement, one of the most rabid of Hitler supporters, and Friedrich Werner, legal adviser of the Spiritual Ministry and instigator of the "cleanse the church" movement. The removal of these fanatics does not put an end to the conflict. The Pastors' Emergency League also demands the head of Reichsbishop Müller, who has steadfastly supported Hossenfelder's extremist policies. Whether Hitler will again take Dr. Frick's advice to avoid a rupture in the church organization or will support Göring, who demands the complete subjugation of the church to the dictation of the German Christians, remains to be seen. The peculiar significance of this church revolt lies in the fact that the moderates are the battering rams of the German Nationalists under Hugenberg's leadership against the Nazis in that original sphere of ancient Prussian reaction, the orthodox Protestant church. The government is acutely conscious of its weakness there, and has retaliated by merging the Hugenberg Telegraph Union with the semi-official Wolff Telegraph Bureau, depriving Hugenberg, who owns 160 newspapers and controls as many others through former financial manipulations, of the news independence of his newspaper concerns. Henceforth these newspapers will depend wholly on the news service of the Hitler Government.

DURING the last few days the Hitler Government has presented several indications of its grave concern for the welfare of the toiling masses. On November 29 the criminal court of Dessau (Anhalt) passed death sentences upon ten Communists for the killing of a Nazi storm trooper during a street fight between Communists and Nazis which took place last February, when the law under which they are being sentenced was not yet on the statute books. On November 30 six Communists were beheaded in Cologne because they had shot two National Socialists during a riot precipitated by uniformed Nazis last January. Not long ago the state of Saxony conducted a trial at Dresden against 89 members of the Socialist Workers' Party, which ended with sentences aggregating 200 years against the accused, and in the past few weeks no fewer than 1,300 Communists have been arrested for participation in demonstrations or for the distribution of literature, all of whom are to be indicted and tried for high treason under the new Göring law dealing with sabotage against the state. "The government is determined," according to the accounts in the Nazi press, "to proceed with all severity and to hold up these men and women as a warning to like elements in the German nation." The Göring law, which provides the death penalty for "every act against the government," is so at variance with modern jurisprudence that Hitler for months refused to sign it.

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Under its provisions every one of the 1,300 Communists may be condemned to death if a Nazi witness can be found who will testify that the defendants distributed or were found in possession of literature attacking the government. The German press is preparing the world for a mass slaughter.

ALL possible support should be given to John Collier, the new Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in his effort to abolish the old land-allotment system for the disposal of Indian lands. The system has already been suspended and sales under it have been stopped, but Congress ought to pass a law repealing it permanently. Commissioner Collier's plan is completely to revise the Indian land policy, with the idea of restoring Indian lands to tribal rather than to individual ownership. Under the old system each Indian was given a piece of land which was required to be sold or divided among his heirs at his death. Often the land was rented out and most of it eventually was lost to Indian control, because Indians, unable to obtain credit, could not borrow for additional land purchase when their inherited piece was too small to live on, or for farm implements. The system, Commissioner Collier is quoted as saying, "destroyed Indian standards of living, deprived them of their resources, their self-support, their self-respect. . . . It was the cleverest, most inescapable case of race destruction ever adopted." The new policy will attempt to establish tribal corporations such as still exist among the Navajos and Pueblos, the only tribes in the United States which are now economically independent and have increased in population. Commissioner Collier's plan deserves support, not only as a policy of simple and sensible justice to the Indians, but as a means of lessening the burden of public relief, to which many thousands of these government wards, reduced to indigence by their government's method of caring for them, have been forced to appeal.

WHEN BANKS CLOSE and swallow up the present and future hopes of thousands of depositors, eight-column headlines stream across the front pages of newspapers. But we have seen no headlines proclaiming the disastrous news that 2,280,000 children of school age in the United States are not in school, that 2,000 rural schools in twenty-four States failed to open this fall, and that sixteen institutions of higher education have closed. Yet the consequences of these casualties, particularly in secondary education, are surely as serious and as far-reaching as those of bank failures. They are only less spectacular because it is impossible to reduce to figures the cost in present and future prospects to a boy or girl who is denied an elementary education in a highly complex world. And the figures cited do not, unfortunately, tell the whole story. One in every four cities has shortened the school term and 715 rural schools are running less than three months. The plight of the school teacher has received more attention than other phases of the educational decline, but it is doubtful whether it is fully realized. In Michigan 7,000 teachers are employed; 12,000 are not. Over the country as a whole, 200,000 certificated teachers are without jobs. And some of those who have jobs can scarcely be said to be profitably employed. One-third of the school teachers this year will get less than $750, while 40,000 rural teachers will get less than $450. Surely the educational starvation of our youngest citizens is one of the major disasters of the depression.

Fit to Print

WHAT is news? The old question presents itself once more in a tale of two universities. On October 31 and November 1 more than 200 delegates representing several thousand students of Columbia University held a conference against war. President Butler honored the gathering with a statement, and various people, including Earl Browder of the Communist Party, spoke. On November 1 the New York *Times* printed a comprehensive story of the first day's meeting, including a good deal of President Butler's statement. On November 2 it reported on the front page that the convention had gone on record against cooperation with the War Department in the event of war.

On November 24, 600 students of New York University held a convention against war. Chancellor Chase honored the gathering with a statement, and various people, including Robert Minor of the Communist Party, spoke. The sessions continued the next day in the form of seminars presided over by professors from various departments on such interesting subjects as Educational Institutions and War, Nationalism and War, International Relations and War, and so on; and the climax was reached on Saturday evening when more than 200 delegates adopted, among others, this uncompromising resolution: "We, the N. Y. U. Anti-War Convention, do solemnly pledge that under no circumstances will we support or cooperate with the government of the United States in any war it may conduct."

The delegates also voted for the complete abolition of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps and pledged themselves to oppose the utilization of science classes and laboratories and all other college resources for the development of war materials. At the end of a preamble which analyzed from a definitely Marxist point of view the forces leading toward a new war, the convention "deprecated" the record of New York University in the last war. The sessions were marked by sharp debates over such questions as whether the convention should identify itself with the organized working class and whether it should support the statement that the "Soviet Union alone has advocated immediate and total disarmament"; and the R. O. T. C. delegates walked out of the convention when the resolution to abolish the organization was passed.

It was, in other words, a very lively affair, at least as interesting as the Columbia meeting. In fact, it seems to have differed in only one important respect from the Columbia gathering: it was more radical in both its discussions and its conclusions. Why, then, did the *Times,* which had covered the Columbia conference so thoroughly, refrain from printing a single word about the N. Y. U. conference? In the issue of Sunday, November 26, readers of the *Times* were informed of the important football scores; they were regaled with the news that "cocktail" diplomas had been awarded to thirty-five graduates of the Bartenders' School; they were even informed that "Dr. Wheeler Favors Fewer Eyeglasses"; but they were presumed not to be interested in knowing that 200 delegates representing several thousand university students favored fewer wars. And was it a mere coincidence that the *Herald Tribune* also ignored the conference?

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Governor Lynch and His Mob

WHATEVER may be the history of lawlessness and frontier justice in the United States, surely the action of Governor Rolph of California is unique! There must have been many instances in which a member of a local police force privately assured the participants in a lynching—who were also his neighbors and friends—that they might expect no punishment from the law. There has undoubtedly been, in lynchings in the past, a good deal of boasting, with reason, on the part of members of a mob that they would get off scot free. But when has the first executive of a State containing nearly 6,000,000 people announced in the public press, not once but a number of times, not just after he might conceivably be expected to have been influenced by impulse and excitement, but again and again in response to the shocked protests of his fellow-citizens and of the country at large—when has the Governor of a State taken his stand, as Governor Rolph has done, with the moronic, brutal, demoralized followers of Judge Lynch?

The two confessed kidnappers and murderers of Brooke Hart in San José were in jail awaiting trial. The body of their victim had been found, so that any possible cause for delay in bringing them into court was removed. California had just passed a law making death the penalty for kidnapping, and the two men were murderers also, so that there was no doubt of their being summarily dealt with. Less than a fortnight had elapsed since the kidnapping. There was, in short, no chance that justice would be anything but swift and even merciless. But with the finding of the body the mob spirit began to rise. All day the streets leading to the jail were packed with threatening people. Governor Rolph was appealed to for troops to protect the prisoners. He refused, and after the lynching he explained his reasons: "Why should I call out troops to protect those two fellows? The people make the laws, don't they? Well, if the people have confidence that troops will not be called out to mow them down when they seek to protect themselves against kidnappers, there is liable to be swifter justice and fewer kidnappings."

The inevitable answer to this giving over of the government to the mob came even more quickly than Governor Rolph might have expected. On the following day a nineteen-year-old Negro was hanged and burned alive in Missouri. A few hours later a mob of several thousand persons attempted to take four prisoners away from 300 armed militiamen in Salisbury, Maryland. In this case, however, the mob was attempting to rescue instead of to lynch the prisoners, themselves accused of having taken part in the lynching of a Negro at Princess Anne, Maryland, on October 18. The sequel to this story was that the four men were released on writs of habeas corpus after having been kept overnight in jail in Baltimore, no cognizance having been taken of the evidence for holding them, and were received back home with frenzied delight by their fellow-townsmen.

That there will be a still larger crop from the seeds of anarchy which Governor Rolph has sown there can be no doubt. The mob spirit is so close to the surface at best that the fillip of official sanction will not fail to call it forth. A number of persons who condemned Governor Rolph for his approval of the lynching pointed out that the affair was nevertheless in direct line with the old vigilante tradition in California. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The vigilantes were groups of men representing their community who, in a drastic fashion, took the law into their own hands at a time when courts of law had not been established or were inaccessible. The San José mob was recruited by an irresponsible high-school boy from the habitués of speakeasies and worse. Here was no great uprising of public feeling to mend an intolerable and otherwise irremediable wrong. It was a drunken orgy. Let us not doubt that, thanks to the Governor of California, similar drunken orgies will follow it.

Elsewhere in this issue of *The Nation* we print an article written from Princess Anne, Maryland. It presents a careful survey of conditions in that locality, and offers a convincing explanation of the causes for the recent lynching there. Let us accept the heritage which a century of slavery and a bloody civil war left us, to account for our dealing with the Negro. Let us add to it our traditions of frontier law and summary justice. Let us give what is due to the often inexcusable delays in our courts. And having admitted all these indubitable causes of this form of lawlessness, uniquely and shamefully American, we still have not touched on the chief factor, which is an economic one.

In Princess Anne, as our article shows, white farmers are practically ruined. They cannot pay the interest on their mortgages, their fall crops were destroyed by weather, their stock is dying from disease, this winter they have for the first time appealed to the State for food to be given to the hungry. More than 80 per cent of the available farm labor on the Eastern Shore is Negro. The Negroes are, as in every locality where they congregate in large numbers, consistently worse off than the whites. There is no work for them, there is no food for them, they remain a hopeless, desperate charge upon the community. The white man who does not know which way to turn for a livelihood, whose only mood is one of dejection and defeat, releases his despair on his weaker neighbor, who is inevitably black. In California, where the problem is not white and black but white and Mexican or Japanese, and where the depression has been no less severely felt, a wave of brutal official oppression has swept the State. Strikes have been put down ruthlessly, striking workers have been killed, the law has been invoked with a gun. That there have been, so far this year, more than twice as many lynchings as in 1932 indicates that the outbreaks which many persons have feared are in the air. It is all the more ominous that to this potential dynamite of economic unrest should have been added the fearful match of Governor Rolph's statement. The mob will not refuse anybody admittance to its ranks. Young children stood in the front lines at San José and watched as two struggling, battered bodies were jerked up in the air on the end of a rope. And the mob is not particular about its choice of a victim. One excuse for butchery is as good as another. It will take all the combined forces of law and order in this country, working earnestly and unceasingly together, to lay the specter that Governor Rolph has caused to walk.

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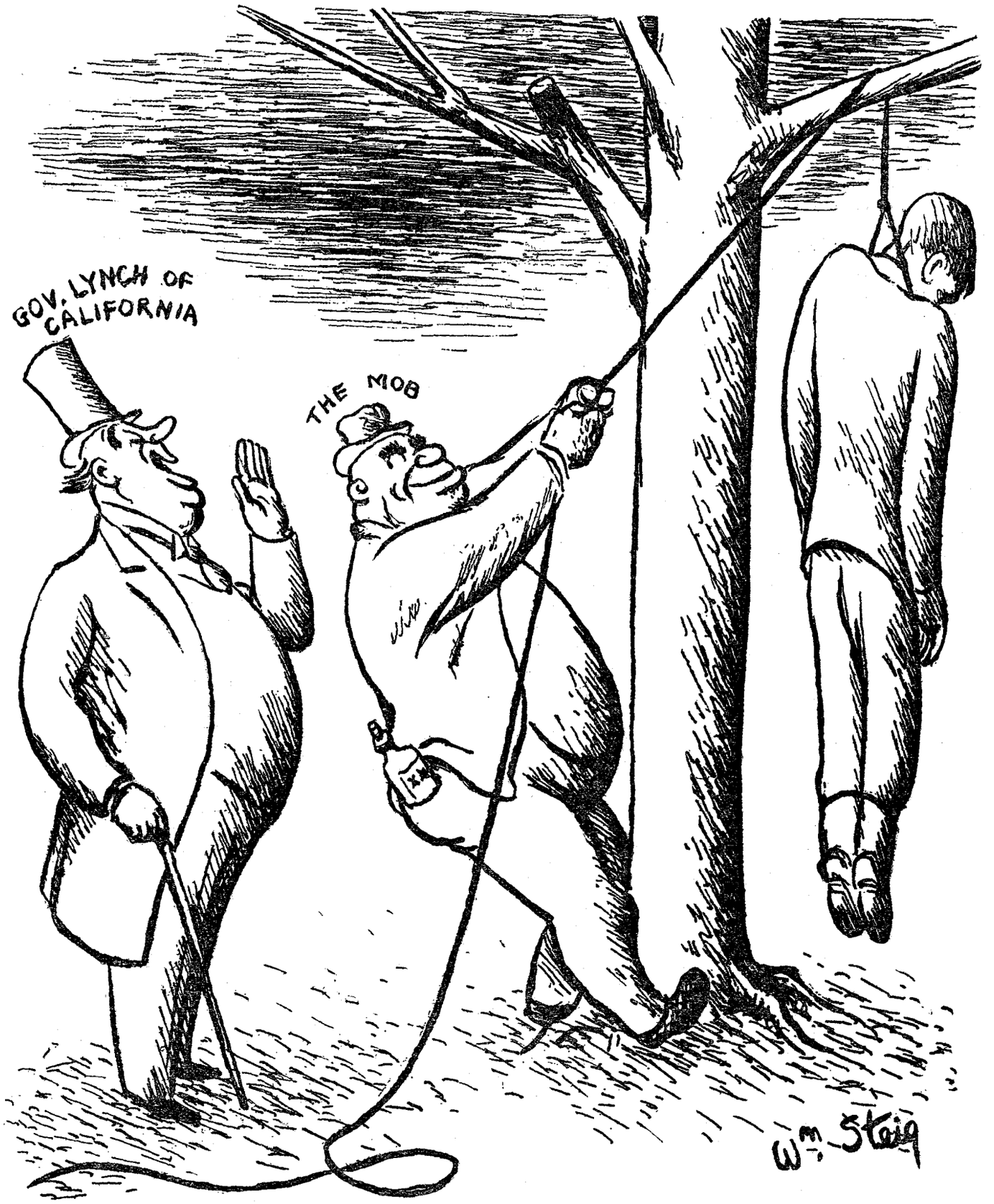

"Go Right Ahead!"

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The Reporters' Revolt

WHATEVER else—and there is a great deal—may be charged to the credit side of the NRA, nothing is more striking and, we hope, significant than the development of newspaper guilds. For years every effort to organize the brain workers in newspaper offices has failed, reporters and sub-editors being too cowed. But as we have already reported, the NRA has made it possible for these white-collar slaves to organize with complete safety. If any newspaper proprietors dare to forbid organization, there is at last a superior tribunal to which their workers may appeal. At first there was considerable resentment on the part of employers. Thus, the Philadelphia *Bulletin* and the Philadelphia *Inquirer* warned their employees that it would not be healthy for them to take part in the discussion of the proposed press code before the Deputy Administrator, or to be affiliated with a guild in so doing. The *Editor and Publisher,* special organ of the journalistic fraternity, which depends upon the good-will of the proprietors for its advertising support, was at first very doubtful. "Are editorial craftsmen ready for unionization?" it asked in August last. "We doubt this. A union must be prepared not only to accept the benefits of organization, but full responsibility. It must provide material to the employer and must regulate employment. . . . If there is to be unionization, it must be national to succeed." It then went on to speak of the example of the British Institute of Journalists: "It is an excellent model, if one were wanted. But until now we have not detected a demand for it here. Maybe it will come. It is not the highest professional ideal but is vastly better than certain conditions obtaining in this country." Now, in December, the movement has spread so fast that the *Editor and Publisher* no longer has any doubts as to whether the workers want unionization. As far back as September it admitted "unrest among editorial workers without parallel in our memory."

In its issue of November 25 it reported that the Cleveland Newspaper Guild had taken steps to organize the craft in the 107 cities of more than 50,000 population. It is doing this not only in order to obtain permanent organization, but so that a more determined opposition may be presented to the newspaper publishers when the final hearings on the long-delayed newspaper code take place. It has gone farther than this. It has asked the workers in every other department of a newspaper to organize separately for the purpose of joining the guild, especially the business, advertising, and circulation departments. The guild reported that it had received applications for chapter status from three other journalistic groups —the employees of the Newspaper Enterprise Association, the Central Press, and the wire groups headed by the International News Service. At the same time the Newark, New Jersey, Newspaper Guild reported a membership of 126, and its intention to be represented by delegates at the national meeting in Washington, D. C., on December 15.

The New York Newspaper Guild has shown a remarkably militant spirit. On November 15 it resolved that "the freedom of the press is one of the essential foundations of human liberty," thus apparently giving support to the publishers' campaign headed by Colonel Robert R. McCormick of the reactionary Chicago *Tribune,* who has been exerting himself on behalf of that liberty in a crusade which both General Johnson and the Deputy Administrator, Professor Lindsay Rogers, declare to be entirely unnecessary. But then the guild proceeded to aim a savage blow at its employers in these words:

> *Resolved* . . . That we do not believe, however, that the newspaper industry, which asserts its freedom from governmental interference with the news, or free comment on the news, can rightfully evade its responsibility to assume, by organization under a code of fair practice, the same responsibilities for public welfare that other industries are being called upon to assume.

This is opposition pure and simple, for the publishers in the open hearing on the code in Washington on September 22 absolutely refused to accept the government's suggestion that they embody in their code a statement of fair practices similar to that of other industries. Their attorney informed the Deputy Administrator that they were quite competent to take care of any abuses that there might be in their business. They were not moved when John H. Fahey, publisher of the Worcester *Post,* declared on that same occasion that he "knew of no industry characterized by more unjust and unfair competitive practices than the newspaper industry." Among those unethical practices he mentioned secret rebates, unwarranted and unfair credits, extraordinary discounts for early payment of bills and early handing in of advertising copy, and the repeating of advertising on flimsy excuses.

The New York Guild evidently does not differ from Mr. Fahey in feeling that the newspaper publishers, now so suddenly awake to the freedom of the press though nine-tenths of them have connived at innumerable interferences with personal liberty, freedom of speech, and public assembly ever since 1917, ought to adopt a code of fair practice without a day's delay. It is stupid of them not to do so, for they will find, like those industrialists who have set their houses in order, that it will pay them in dollars and cents, as well as in the respect of the communities in which they operate. Unfortunately the government has apparently no intention of insisting upon a fair-practice code. We cannot see why it should not do so. If there is any industry which needs such a code it is certainly the newspaper business, if only because it is one which is so largely affected by public interest. There is certainly no question of the freedom of the press here, but only of a mutual agreement upon the part of publishers to play fair not merely with the public but with one another.

We sincerely trust that when the reporters have perfected their organizations they will utilize them not only to insist upon fair practices in the business itself, but to make sure that the editors and owners are consistent in regard to the freedom guaranteed by the Constitution to individuals as well as to the press. The newspapers ought to understand that every time some "red" is denied his constitutional rights, it is a blow at the rights of every individual and of the press in this country.

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Issues and Men

Secretary Wallace Sees the Light

THE Secretary of Agriculture is doing, in one respect at least, a fine job, and I say this with various epistles lying on my overburdened desk the tenor of which is that Henry Wallace is a tool of Wall Street and should be removed at once. Well, this tool of the international bankers has discovered what the President of the United States has not—that this country must cut either its tariffs or its industrial and agricultural production. If it cannot, or will not, regain its export market, then the United States is indeed cursed with far too effective an industrial machine, and will have to content itself with operating it only in part, which means waste and inefficiency. The Secretary declares further that, whatever policy we decide upon, the country should for once stick to its decision and program for at least ten years. If it will not do this, it must plan at once, in Mr. Wallace's words, "to keep no less than 50,000,000 acres of land out of use, no matter how loud may be the outcry of certain carrying, handling, processing, and exporting interests."

In other words, the problem is whether we shall continue to do an international business or go in for what is called "autarchy" and do a purely nationalistic business, letting the rest of the world go hang. Mr. Wallace sees that clearly. "If we follow," he says, "the international program, we absolutely must receive great quantities of goods from abroad and must not be disturbed by the clamor of people who are hurt thereby." This statement was in one of the three speeches which he delivered in the Middle West in behalf of the Administration's agricultural-restoration policy, and must therefore have been made with the President's consent. But the President himself has thus far refused to declare himself any more definitely about the tariffs than on the question of inflation. Undoubtedly, Mr. Roosevelt, being the shrewd politician that he is, realizes that if he undertakes to cut the tariff he will meet with the most terrific opposition on the part of the vested manufacturing interests. But by this time he must know that he cannot undertake any reform policy without encountering bitter antagonism from those whose pocket nerves are affected by the change.

He has already encountered strong opposition in connection with the NRA. Certain large employers are fighting it and him because they are called upon to abandon their long-continued hostility to labor unions. Even the recognition of Russia has called forth denunciation from certain interests who believe that they will thereby be unfavorably affected. One woman was quite frank about it the other day—in the presence of a member of the Cabinet. She said that she was bitterly opposed to recognition because her husband was in the lumber business and now we should be flooded with Russian lumber and he would be hopelessly ruined. That was, of course, characteristically shallow, uninformed, and selfish thinking. A great national policy was at issue, one that might have most far-reaching effects in saving the world from a horrible war in the East, to say nothing of other results, but this woman could think only of her own purse. Of course the worst opposition to Secretary Wallace's common-sense proposals will come from the farmers who are trying to make a go of it on the 50,000,000 acres which will have to be abandoned if we decide to do business only with ourselves, and from the vested protective-tariff interests, which have so far gone unscathed of Mr. Roosevelt.

Most of these would agree with Lord Beaverbrook, the great British newspaper magnate, according to this report of a speech by him at Putney, England, appearing in his own newspaper, the *Daily Express*:

> LORD BEAVERBROOK: "I absolutely assert that in advancing a policy of a customs union in the British Empire we are doing God's work."
>
> "When you say that you are doing God's work, does God admit that one man is a foreigner and another is his brother?" [asked a hearer].
>
> LORD BEAVERBROOK: "Certainly. Why did God raise up the British Empire? Why did God raise up the Israelites? Why has God maintained the British Empire during the tempests and trials of centuries? Why has God made us the greatest, finest, and most powerful people in the world?" **(Loud applause.)**

Every protected manufacturer whose business is maintained by a protective tariff or whose profits are regulated thereby is certain that the tariff is doing God's work. The Secretary of Agriculture is right: we cannot set our face in the direction of tariff reduction without a tremendous uproar.

Yet there lies the road to real help for the farmer. We may by all sorts of temporary devices, such as dumping abroad at a considerable loss to the taxpayers, plowing under cotton, paying farmers for letting acreage lie fallow, discouraging industry on the farms in other ways, and purchasing surplus hogs, temporarily boost prices. But such relief can only be temporary. These are all economically indefensible actions, and I believe that no one knows it better than Mr. Wallace. Indeed, I think his appeal for the continuance of an international trade instead of a purely national one is proof positive that he knows that the other remedies of the AAA are defensible only as temporary relief measures—if they be defensible at all. If we could only once make the farmers understand how enormous a part the protective tariff has played in their downfall we should have a farmer revolution indeed. Meanwhile practically every article the farmer buys for his own domestic use and that of his family, to say nothing of his farm machinery, has had its cost to him increased by some indefensible tariff. But he goes on thinking that if he can only be "adequately protected," if he can only be drawn farther into the charmed circle of those who are protected by our tariffs, all will be well with him. And the man who last promised additional protection to the farmer was, by the way, no less a person than Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Oswald Garrison Villard

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What Would Inflation Mean?

By MAXWELL S. STEWART

IF one is to judge by the press, at least that of the metropolitan areas, the United States has arrived at the crossroads of destiny. Curving gently away to the left stretches the broad highway called Inflation, which descends gradually into the Vale of Destruction. But if we turn sharply to the right and climb the precipitous trail of Sound Money we shall eventually be rewarded by a glimpse of the golden city of Prosperity, now unhappily hidden behind a cloud. To the average American, however, this picture is not wholly convincing. Among the pious pilgrims who are beckoning him to take the mountain trail, he believes that he can recognize several of the selfsame brigands who so mercilessly waylaid him under similar circumstances four years ago. He may be pardoned, therefore, if he seems to show a preference for the lower road, even though he is somewhat hazy about its final destination. At least that portion of the highway which lies directly ahead appears to be attractive.

The ordinary newspaper account may be taken as typical of the deliberate obfuscation which has accompanied the discussion of inflation in this country. No issue has been so widely talked about and yet so little understood by the average man. He knows that inflation means more money and that it would be marked by a rise in the cost of living; but he is apt to be somewhat uncertain whether the much-abused Roosevelt monetary policy is inflation or not, and to be completely in the dark as to what the effect of inflation would be with respect to his own particular problems.

It is necessary to realize, first of all, that as used by most economists the term inflation signifies much more than merely the printing of greenbacks. When the volume of effective purchasing medium as represented by money and credit decreases more repidly than the supply of available goods, the resultant decline in prices is described as "deflation." But when, for one reason or another, the effective purchasing medium increases more quickly than the volume of production, the rise in prices is "inflationary." Either process involves painful readjustments; and if the change is sudden or drastic, either of the two may result in profound economic dislocation.

While inflation may be attained in many ways, the most obvious short cut would be for the government to cover its expenditures by the simple device of printing legal tender, thus obviating the necessity for collecting taxes. But so far as prices are concerned it makes little difference whether the additional purchasing medium is supplied in the form of paper currency, silver coin, or bank credit. The chief difference between the various types lies rather in the question of who is to receive the benefits of the inflation, and who is to foot the bill.

For the basic fact about inflation is that it involves a redistribution of wealth. Increasing the volume of money does not of itself create a greater supply of goods and services, but merely brings about a shifting of the labels denoting ownership between the various classes of society. Although the proponents of inflation readily admit this essential fact, they claim that on the whole the redistribution is a beneficial one. If dollars were cheapened, debtors would profit at the expense of creditors, while the obvious losses of the white-collar workers would be counterbalanced by the gains of farmers and other producers of primary commodities.

In the early stages of inflation this contention appears to contain a large element of truth, but as the process develops it becomes more and more open to question. The chief beneficiaries of a continued and rapid rise in prices, for example, would be entrepreneurs, shareholders, and speculators. As inflation would always enable manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers to offer their products at a higher price level than that at which they purchased their supplies, business profits should greatly exceed expectation and outdistance the gains of the mere laborer or farmer, thus giving the business and stock-owning classes a much larger share of the national income than in normal times. This would be even more true of speculators. Being in closer touch with financial developments than the ordinary citizen and possessing funds for immediate investment, speculators are always in a position to profit from any change in economic relationships. One need only recall the hectic days of 1919 or 1929 to verify this observation. Inflation has no contribution to make toward the solution of the Marxian problem of surplus value.

Such gains as might be achieved by the above-mentioned groups would be at the expense of the majority of the remaining citizens. With very few exceptions, prices are more sensitive than wages or salaries, particularly in the case of the so-called white-collar class. For most of the readers of *The Nation* this fact is of paramount importance, because so far as they are concerned the cost of living would tend to rise much more rapidly than their incomes. Of the 49,000,000 gainfully employed persons in the United States in 1930, at least 21,000,000 belong in the group whose incomes are fairly rigidly fixed in terms of dollars. These include not only the clerical and professional classes, but also such diverse elements as domestic servants, insurance agents, salesmen, and the employees of the public utilities, railways, and the government. Widows living on fixed incomes and veteran employees who have retired on pensions would of course have to be added to this list as they would be particularly hard hit. Yet although the majority of the individuals in the above-mentioned groups would feel the pinch of increasing prices most keenly, a few might be benefited by the increased employment that should result from swollen business profits.

The position of the 17,000,000 industrial and farm laborers would be only a little less critical. Inflationists have made much of the fact that during and immediately following the World War wages for the most part kept pace with the advancing cost of living. It is doubtful, however, that this situation can in any sense be regarded as typical. The destruction wrought by the war, coupled with the demand for munitions, had created an unprecedented demand for supplies, while the drafting of millions of men for war service had caused a grave shortage of man power. As a result of this emergency, labor was able to obtain better conditions than at any other period in history. In previous inflations,

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however, the urban wage-earners have often been among the chief sufferers.

Similarly, experience has thrown considerable doubt upon the dogma that inflation alleviates the burden of indebtedness. To be sure, if money declines in value in relation to commodities and wages, such obligations as were contracted at the lower price level will have become easier to discharge. But in the course of ordinary business transactions new debts are constantly being incurred on which higher rates of interest would be demanded as a protection against the risks of inflation. The transitory nature of such relief as is afforded may be illustrated by the tragic condition of modern Germany. No large nation is more heavily burdened by debts at the present time, yet apart from reparations the whole of the pre-war and war-time indebtedness was wiped out by the inflation which culminated in 1923. Moreover, the fact that a large share of its present debts is owed to foreigners, thus raising the transfer problem, is at least partially due to the disruption of the German capital market as the result of the flight from the mark. Another factor frequently glossed over by inflationists is that most persons are at one and the same time both debtors and creditors. Consequently, the relief afforded to any particular debtor by advancing prices must be set against the losses which he sustains on his investments, bank deposits, or insurance policies.

Of the producing groups, the eight or ten million farmers stand the best chance of improving their relative position through a moderate inflation. The immediate effect of a general increase in the volume of money would be to stimulate the demand for goods, thereby assuring a relatively higher return to the producers of primary commodities. But the overexpansion of productive resources which occurred between 1917 and 1920 should serve as a warning regarding the benefits to be gained from an artificially stimulated boom. In the long run, farmers, like most others, would fare best under conditions of monetary stability. An inflationary orgy, accompanied by high interest rates and restriction of credit, would ultimately react against them just as surely as it would against the urban workers with whom their fate is irrevocably linked. This would be particularly true if, as is highly probable, inflation led foreign nations to adopt stringent measures against "cheap" American exports.

But of course no one is advocating uncontrolled inflation. The most that has been proposed is the printing of $3,000,000,000 worth of paper currency as an emergency measure to speed the process of recovery. For, despite the fact that sound-money propagandists have gone to ridiculous lengths to stress the paralyzing effect of monetary uncertainty, it can scarcely be denied that the distribution of $3,000,000,000 worth of purchasing medium among the neediest classes would have a stimulating effect on business activity. Millions of Americans are living on the present low-consumption standards not out of choice but because they do not have the money to purchase the desired goods. Hundreds of thousands of others who are carefully safeguarding their resources against possible sickness or unemployment would probably spend a large proportion of the money they have saved if they had serious misgivings about its future purchasing power. Moreover, many conservatives appear to have unduly exaggerated the difficulty of checking an inflation once it has started. While it would become increasingly difficult to resist the demand for each successive issue of fiat currency after the effect of the previous one had worn off, the post-war experience of France indicates that an intelligent and courageous government can check inflation even after it has been under way for years. Unfortunately, there is no precedent in American history that would give one the assurance that Congress would have the foresight to check a boom in business activity in time to prevent a disastrous reaction.

What, then, are we to do? Are we to follow placidly the advice of the men whose policies have led us deep into the abyss, and, after tightening our belts, seek to grope our way out by means of curtailed production and what is euphoniously known as "economy"? On this point at least all leading economists are in complete agreement: *it cannot be done.* In the depths of a depression as severe and widespread as the present one, mere economy is suicide. There must be some expansion of purchasing power, and where private enterprise is helpless, government initiative is essential.

Aside from open-market operations, which have proved pitifully inadequate, two possible courses are open. The first, which might be called the Warren plan, recently espoused by President Roosevelt, is that of seeking to raise domestic prices by depreciating the value of the dollar in terms of gold. This plan is not genuinely expansionist, because it does not increase the purchasing power of any group within the country except that of a relatively small number of gold producers. It is dependent for its effect upon the possibility that the relative cheapening of American goods will enable the United States to expand its export trade at the expense of its competitors. Needless to say, the objections to this scheme are overwhelming. No nation occupying as predominant a place in world economy as the United States can deliberately depreciate its currency without adversely affecting economic conditions throughout the world. Faced by the prospect of a steady flow of undervalued goods from the United States, accompanied by a probable reduction in its demand for imports, who can blame foreign nations for adopting reprisals against American trade? If there is any lesson to be learned from the events of the past four years, it should be the utter futility of measures designed to increase business activity within one country at the expense of foreign peoples. Furthermore, there is always the danger that by undermining government credit the present gold-buying program might lead to uncontrolled inflation, with its dangerous domestic as well as international complications.

Fortunately, however, the inadequacies of the Warren plan need not throw us back upon the mercy of the ruffians who stripped us on our last pilgrimage in search of the Golden Era, nor yet force us to choose the broad road to inflation. Leading economists, both in this country and abroad, have repeatedly declared that large-scale government expenditures for public works made out of borrowed funds, if substantial enough, would greatly stimulate economic activity without adverse international repercussions. Moreover, such an undertaking—even involving many times the present $3,000,000,000 program—could be made self-liquidating through increased return from taxation. This means, of course, that the present level of taxes must be maintained or increased, with special safeguards to prevent the Mitchells and Morgans from dodging their due share of responsibility. It need scarcely be added that this is one type of sound-money program to which the financial barons are unalterably opposed.

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Back of the Maryland Lynching

By ROSE BRADLEY

Princess Anne, Maryland, November 25

ALTHOUGH white storekeepers in Princess Anne, Maryland, will tell you that the day after George Armwood, accused of raping a white woman, was lynched "everything was just the same—you couldn't tell anything had happened," you meet an atmosphere of tenseness, fear, and suspicion on entering the town even now. There is a restlessness in the air. The lynching has not "settled" anything. Men hang around the street corners in groups, many of them drunk. When they see a stranger appear, they stop talking and their mouth and eyes grow hard. Someone promptly strikes up a conversation with you, to find out your business in town and to make you understand, indirectly, that this is not a healthy place to linger or to pry. There is still a feeling of uncertainty as to what may happen, a sense that the lynching was not buried with the remains of George Armwood. Negroes avoid the town.

Staying there overnight, your sleep is not an easy one. In the hotel just next to the courthouse and a few steps from the spot where a Negro's charred body lay in the street a few short weeks ago, your movements are kept track of. Next morning you are invited to visit places of interest twenty or thirty miles away. As one unemployed white worker in Crisfield said to me, "They don't know whether you've come after them or not."

We find the county agent, Mr. Kellar—agent for the well-to-do farmers' interests and for the county machine—eager to make our acquaintance. Since we are interested in farming conditions, he tells us something about the storm of August 23, minimizing the damage which it caused to property values and to crops. He tells us that some land has been flooded and injured by salt water, owing to the fact that Somerset County at its highest point is only fifteen feet or so above sea level. Half the corn crop was destroyed, he says, and all of the late tomatoes. He does not mention that the late vegetables, which the small farmers were counting on to carry them through the winter, were ruined utterly; but he does admit that many will have to buy feed for their stock this winter or lose the stock. (These farmers, however, have no cash to buy it with; and the banks of Princess Anne are extending no credit at all, and the stores only one week's credit to "people who have employment.")

Mr. Kellar is a member of one of the old "county families," a typical product of the Eastern Shore aristocracy, with hard blue eyes, loose mouth, and puffy jowls. He expresses very clearly the attitude of his caste toward the Negroes: "We have all Negro labor in this county," he says. "They work under a supervisor, but even at that they're not worth anything. And once in a while, we get rid of one. Ha-ha-ha! [Loud laughter which evokes answering laughter from the lady supervisor of relief sent down recently from Baltimore.] We just got rid of one recently—I don't know if that's what brought you down here or not. But we're not like those people out West—we don't go burning bridges or anything. If we have a few more bad years, I don't know, maybe they'll start getting radical around here, too."

It is evident that the leading spirits of Somerset County are watching events in the Middle West very closely. This is also farming country, its main products corn, tomatoes, and strawberries. When you discover that more than half the county is marsh land and that in a comparatively small area there are 1,500 farms, you see that the majority of these must be very small farms, particularly hard hit by the agricultural crisis, as well as by "acts of God" like the storm and the diseases that have lately been causing serious losses in horses and hogs. Almost every farm has two or three mortgages, frequently to two or three times the present value of the place. Very little interest is being collected; I found one elderly couple who could not even raise $9 a year for the interest on a $150 mortgage. As far as taxes go, people have practically stopped paying them. School teachers in Somerset County have so far received no salaries this year. The county is forced to borrow heavily from State and private sources.

Under these circumstances, also, the county leaders are forced to consider how they can keep the poor farmers and the unemployed farmhands and oystermen from taking radical measures to relieve their present distress. Up to a short time ago eight out of the nine Maryland counties on the Eastern Shore had no functioning relief machinery. They had refused all offers of State or federal aid, asserting resentfully, "We can take care of our own"; and "No real distress exists"; "Our people are used to a low standard of living, and are no worse off now than they ever were." Just a week after the Armwood lynching, however, delegations of leading citizens from Somerset and Worcester counties went up to Baltimore and asked that their counties be included this winter in the State relief program. They do not feel it is safe to postpone feeding the hungry any longer.

When I was in Princess Anne I myself heard the county agent say to the newly arrived relief worker from Baltimore: "We have four or five hundred restless men right here around Princess Anne that have got to be put to work—soon! What's the earliest you can get them started to work on those ditches?" Undoubtedly the late lynching was only a temporary outlet for this restlessness, a temporary distraction from it. In the uneasy atmosphere that follows such an event, there is no assurance that restlessness will not take broader forms of action.

One appeal to which the white masses of the Eastern Shore can still be counted on to respond very readily is the appeal to 100-per-cent Americanism. The history and traditions of the Shore, along with its isolation from the main stream of modern industrial civilization, make such an appeal all the more effective and inevitably direct the response into sharper attacks upon the Negroes. The fact is that most of the white families on the Shore are Scotch and English types whose ancestors settled here as early as 1650. There are historic landmarks everywhere from Revolutionary and pre-Revolutionary times. The first Presbyterian church in America was built in Princess Anne. Pictures of George Washington, gentleman and slave-owner, adorn every public

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building, and in the George Washington Hotel in Princess Anne there still exists a cardroom where slaves were lost and won "before the war." Patriotic and religious sentiments are intimately coupled with the old slave-owning ideology and the viciousness of carpet-bagger days. "A lynching is bread and meat to me," said the editor of the *Eastern Shore Republican,* rocking his baby daughter on his knee as he spoke. He admitted to being within three feet of the jail door when the mob got Armwood—but was there in his "reportorial capacity." "There was nothing to it," he kept repeating. "I don't care if they lynch another one tomorrow."

White workers on the Eastern Shore still have an abiding faith in Roosevelt's desire to help them, even though they are mainly disillusioned about the NRA. An unemployed oysterman in Crisfield, a sea-food center some twenty-five miles from Princess Anne, asked me: "Is that NRA breaking things up much there in New York? It sure made wages go down here. For a little while the girls in the shirt factories were making as high as $18 a week, but in about three weeks all the shirt factories shut down. I think the NRA has kind of gone to pieces around here." In the same town an employed worker in one of the oyster-packing houses told me that after fifteen years in the same plant he was now earning $10 a week for a sixteen-hour working day. He thought that his boss, "one of the big bugs," was not cooperating with Roosevelt, and he wanted to tell the President how badly the NRA was working out around there. He believed the President would do something about it.

Negro workers, when they dare to talk at all, are much more ready to admit distrust of Roosevelt's good intentions toward the working people. And it must be remembered that Negroes form between 80 and 90 per cent of the basic labor supply in Somerset County. Under the combined effects of high prices, low wages, unemployment, and a sharper campaign of terror against their people they cannot help feeling bitter. On the one hand, a prejudice in white circles against giving relief of any kind to Negroes; on the other hand, wages of Negroes being driven down to as low as 25 to 50 cents a day, as is the case in one sawmill in Crisfield. Double oppression, as workers and as Negroes, has made them feel more strongly, but terror keeps them silent. Still, one Negro laborer who trusted me said: "I don't believe Roosevelt really wants to do much for us. He's all bound up with those rich white people that want to keep us down."

In the Negro schools instruction in patriotism is also utilized as a means of "keeping them down." It is the high point in the curriculum—"My Country 'Tis of Thee," the salute to the flag, and stories of George Washington's boyhood read out of textbooks discarded by the white schools. In one Negro school which I visited elementary school attendance had fallen off from 120 last year to 68 this year. Many never got there because of distance and lack of clothing. Teachers and pupils had to act as janitor, and the school itself had to raise money to wire the building for electric light. The schoolhouse faced a marshy field where several grocery stores dumped their waste and where insects hovered all the year round. A pest of flies came from someone's pigsty in the rear. For this the Negro children, growing up amid lynchings and starvation, were taught to be grateful.

Here is what the Negroes of Somerset County have to be thankful for. Two or three hundred Negroes gather every day at the Crisfield docks waiting for the oyster boats to come in, when a small percentage of their number can get odd jobs. They work at hauling or at shucking, while whites get the better-paid dredging jobs. During the season those who are lucky enough to be hired stand all day in the rheumatic dampness of the shucking shed to make from $4 to $6 a week —when the oysters happen to come in. They all say: "You can't make a living at shucking." One woman told me she had come to work that day at seven-thirty, and by one o'clock had barely made 75 cents.

Many of them live in miserable two-story company shacks, within sight and smell of the oyster and crabbing plants. These shacks are built on oyster-shell dumps at the edge of the ocean, the outhouses directly fronting the cold and windy Chesapeake. Negroes in Crisfield who received flour from the Red Cross last winter had to do domestic work in white families to pay for it; outside of Crisfield no Negroes in Somerset County received even so much as flour, and there is little hope that the new supervisor will defy local prejudice to the point of helping them very much this year. Every penny they earn now goes into food. They wear the cast-off clothing of whites, and those who live in the surrounding countryside walk as much as seven or ten miles to work. This Negro proletariat with its roots in the countryside has hundreds of unemployed around Crisfield alone, a town of two or three thousand. It is a thing to cause uneasiness among the white packers who own most of the town.

"It looks like things is getting worse," a Negro woman in one of the packing houses said to me. "Saturday night one of our boys was in Andrews's store in Marion, warming hisself by the stove. His name was Harold Young. He wasn't doing nothing and he wasn't saying nothing. Mr. Marshall come into the store drunk and went for him with a knife. He cut Harold up awful bad across the face—you could see his gums. They didn't do nothing to the white man yet."

Another person who told us about the knifing at Marion was a Negro farmhand whom we met on a lonely by-road. He also told us what he considered to be the facts about George Armwood. Old Mrs. Denston, the woman Armwood was alleged to have attacked, he said, was supposed to carry a good deal of money on her person. So a white man with whom Armwood had dealings planned to rob her and forced Armwood to help him. When the case became known, he at first hid Armwood to keep him from talking. Then, as the search grew hotter, he gave the Negro up to the police, shifting all the blame, as it is easy for white men to do on the Eastern Shore. This version of the affair is more sensible than the tale spread by the wife of one of the local officials, to the effect that Armwood, after raping the eighty-two-year-old woman, had chewed off her breasts.

The farmhand who talked to me in spite of the reasons which his life on the Eastern Shore had given him for distrusting whites understood that the Negroes needed the help of white sympathizers if they were eventually to secure bearable conditions. His sincerity was evident from the fact that he talked so freely with me, a stranger on the Eastern Shore, at a time of intensified terror.

"They'd hang me if they knew I was talking to you like this," he said, as we shook hands. And he spoke in deadly earnest.

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The Reichstag Fire Still Burns!

By JOHN GUNTHER

Vienna, November 15

IT is not quite correct to say, as it is being said outside Germany, that the Reichstag-fire trial is a farce or a frame-up. Not quite. I covered the trial, in Leipzig and Berlin, during its first six weeks. Perhaps by the time this article is in print a verdict will have been reached. Prophecy is risky, but as I write I think there is a good chance that the court will bow to the overwhelming burden of the evidence, and that Torgler and the three Bulgarians will be given nominal sentences or even acquitted.

Of course it isn't a fair trial. No political trial can be fair in Germany today. I don't need to labor the point that the defendants are treated *ex parte* as enemies of the state, that two of them hardly understand a word of what is going on, that free conduct for witnesses abroad is refused, that the procedure gives the presiding judge the power of one-sided inquisition, that at least one of the defense lawyers is either a hopeless incompetent or completely uninterested in his client's case.

But just the same, the trial is not an overt frame-up. This should be made clear abroad. The judges have listened to dozens of expert witnesses whose testimony has served by inference to incriminate the Nazis; witnesses for the defense, especially in the last weeks of the trial, were given fairly full hearing. If the trial were a frame-up, the proceedings would have ended long ago and all five defendants have been decapitated. No, the court has got itself into a curious dilemma—of having to pretend to be fair even while displaying the greatest personal animus against the defendants; and little by little this necessity to simulate justice, caused by the pressure of foreign opinion, has led to a modicum of respect for justice in the courtroom. Not much. But something.

The court is, it is clear, in a terrible muddle. The judges would probably like to declare the defendants guilty forthwith. But they don't dare. Evidence *has* been heard making their innocence—except Van der Lubbe's—clear, to any impartial person. On the other hand, the judges cannot possibly invite the displeasure of the government—General Göring has publicly attacked and threatened the court—by calling off proceedings and setting Torgler and the Bulgarians free. Dr. Bünger, the presiding judge, doesn't want to spend the rest of his life in a concentration camp. A wicked situation—with five lives at stake.

It is not quite proper, by the way, to attack Dr. Sack or even Dr. Teichert, two of the defense lawyers. It does not matter that they are Nazis. Their clients have a far better chance than if they were non-Nazis. A Nazi convinced of Torgler's innocence—as Sack is—of course carries more weight with the court and the public than would a liberal or non-party lawyer. And as Arthur Garfield Hays has pointed out, the defense lawyers have not been guilty of negligence in allowing the prosecution to get away with its monstrous belief that Van der Lubbe is normal. The more normal Van der Lubbe is and the more capable of having acted alone, the better it is for the Communist defendants.

The dreadful blundering of the prosecution has made mincemeat of the case. The prosecution hardly dares any longer produce conspiracy "evidence," showing that Van der Lubbe had accomplices, out of terror that the accomplices may turn out to be not Communists but Nazis. Moreover, the police arrested the Bulgarians on the most fantastically slim grounds. I imagine the most unpopular man in Germany must be the waiter, Helmer, whose suspicions caused Dimitrov's arrest. Once jailed, the Bulgarians had to be tried. And international ballyhoo compelled an open, public trial, and made it impossible for the membership of the court to be changed. As the case progressed, it became apparent that the prosecution's evidence was a colossal confusion of inaccuracies, contradictions, and plain lies. But the trial, once started, could not be stopped.

No one, of course, counted on the brilliant gallantry of Dimitrov. This tousled Bulgarian revolutionary has, moreover, brains. Unerringly he has asked those pertinent questions most embarrassing to the prosecution's case. And his courage—magnificent! When a witness cannot be found and Dimitrov excitedly yells, "Have you looked for him in a concentration camp?"—when he turns with cool arrogance to Göring and asks him, "Are you afraid of my questions?"—when this lone Communist, arrested for no reason whatever except a waiter's silly suspicions, charged with having committed a crime on a night when even the prosecution admits he was in Munich, hundreds of miles away, yet facing the executioner's axe, when this man rises in court and says his No to Nazism, the world listens, and listens as to no other Communist alive.

The court became, under Dimitrov's heckling, more and more nervous. At about the end of the third week it was suddenly clear to everyone that the whole basis of the case had changed. No longer was the trial an attempt to pin the guilt of the Reichstag arson on the five defendants. It became instead a process seeking to clear the Nazis of the same charge. The "Brown Book" was condemned in court; but it was the "Brown Book" which was on trial. In no other country in the world, surely, could one imagine a like spectacle—two Cabinet ministers of the rank of Goebbels and Göring being called to the witness stand in a criminal trial to testify on oath that they were not criminals.

My own belief is that when the trial opened, the judges, like many other people in Germany, genuinely thought that Van der Lubbe was a Communist and that the Communists were guilty. As evidence piled up ruining this thesis, the judges grew embarrassed. They did not have the courage to call off the trial. Instead—panic. Rattled, the prosecution produced incredible cranks as identification witnesses, whom even the judges could hardly stomach. Rattled, Dr. Bünger began to throw Dimitrov out of court as his intolerably pointed questions became too painful for His Honor's self-respect; rattled, the court adjourned whenever testimony got too hot.

The prosecution prepared the case so badly, perhaps, because at the beginning no one thought it would be especially difficult to condemn the defendants. Once the court was

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forced into calling every possible relevant witness, like porters and workmen in the Reichtag building, there was no telling what might come out. The police might have "influenced" everybody within a hundred miles of the building. But they didn't. So little by little extraordinary items of information emerged: the statement of a porter that another deputy besides Torgler left the building late that night; the evidence of Aldermann, a servant in Göring's house, that he had heard sounds in the famous underground passage leading to the Reichstag and had pasted cotton threads across the door, which were broken; the testimony of Dr. Gempp, the discharged fire superintendent, that he saw petrol in the burning hall.

Absolutely fascinating is the problem remaining: Who did set the fire? Who, that is, prompted Van der Lubbe to the arson? The theory that Van der Lubbe was an overt *agent provocateur* must be given up. The Nazis would have picked a much better one, a man who could more plausibly be connected with orthodox Communists, someone with a black-and-white Communist "record," who would have made proletarian speeches in court, and so on. It is virtually impossible that Van der Lubbe could have been led through the Göring tunnel by storm troopers; by this time he would have given some hint of it in court. Van der Lubbe is not a friend of the Nazis. The court trembles with nervousness when he speaks. And, a pretty obvious victim of manic-depressive psychosis, he could not possibly be acting, covering up. In any decent court he would of course by this time have been turned over to a lunacy commission.

But if Van der Lubbe was not a Nazi agent, if he was not an orthodox Communist, what then? There is just one chance in a million that he did set the fire alone. It sounds incredible; but even Mr. Hays, a member of the London commission of investigation, admitted after attending the court that it was remotely—conceivably—possible. Van der Lubbe himself says so. And Van der Lubbe is a very honest fellow. A moron, he gives every indication, in his dim, baffled way, of trying to dredge the truth from the mists of his mind. A very plausible theory remains. It was suggested by an American newspaperman in Berlin long ago, before the trial, and then modified by events in court. It is that Van der Lubbe was not an *agent provocateur,* but a dupe. Nazi underlings in the Berlin slums, *disguised* as Communists or anarchists or simple malefactors, may have seen Van der Lubbe in his furtive wanderings, may have heard him plan the three other fires he set, and may have suggested to him the Reichstag arson. Or perhaps it was his own idea, and spies heard him discuss it. Brilliant! They pretend to be his friends. They learn his plans. He tells them he intends to set the fire on a certain night. Then—without telling him—they, *alone,* also enter the building. He knows nothing of this. We do not know who the others are, or how they got in; neither does Van der Lubbe. But the others were there. Because—*two different fires burned in the Reichstag that night.*

This sounds improbably fantastic, but apparently it is true. Van der Lubbe, setting his first three fires, in the old imperial castle, the Berlin Rathaus, and the Neukölln welfare building (this latter a small wooden structure), succeeded in producing only miserable smudges. They were not fires; they were failures to set fires. Similarly, in the Reichstag, Van der Lubbe apparently only managed to ignite a couple of tablecloths and curtains and his shirt with the household fire-lighters he carried; his trail of fires was easily stamped out. It is almost certain that Van der Lubbe had nothing to do with the central chamber where a vast caldron of flames was roaring. Here were traces of petrol, according to Gempp, and of a secret inflammable fluid, according to other experts, neither of which Van der Lubbe himself—breaking through the heavy restaurant window—could have carried. He insists that he was equipped only with the household lighters. He is half blind; the Reichstag was a dark, unfamiliar building; it is built mostly of stone and very heavy wood; yet two minutes five seconds (by the reconstruction) after he broke the window, enormous flames were splashing through the central hall. Van der Lubbe, on being arrested, must have been the most surprised man on earth at the success of "his" fire.

The court, terrified of incriminating the Nazis, has not, I believe, taken official cognizance of the second-fire theory. The court, like a jittery mule, stubbornly proceeds along the preposterous lines set by the prosecution, and shies in mortal alarm whenever anything really interesting turns up, when, in a word, the fire gets hot.

The Nature of Art Under Capitalism

By KENNETH BURKE

THE present article proposes to say something further on the subject of art and propaganda. It will attempt to set forth a line of reasoning as to why the contemporary emphasis must be placed largely upon propaganda, rather than upon "pure" art. The general procedure to be followed is: (a) some basic considerations as to the relation between work and ethics are offered; (b) the attempt is made to show that this integral relationship between work and ethics is violated under capitalism; (c) by reference to the psychology of art, and to the connection between art and ethics, I attempt to show why the breach between work and ethics, indigenous to capitalistic enterprise, requires a "corrective" kind of literature. The article is in the form of seven propositions, with a brief demonstration of each.

1. Work-patterns and ethical patterns are integrally related.

The teachings of naturalism and religion seem united on this point. The great monastic orders were invariably founded upon a scheme of practical duties. "Virtue," however far into the infinite it might range, was always grounded upon the performance of specific earthly tasks. In India the four castes seem to be corruptions of four original occupational patterns, four kinds of *duties* or *obligations* having decayed into distinct categories of *privilege* and *privation.* Duty, or social function, was the synthesis out of which the two decadent antitheses, privilege and privation, have arisen.

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The fervor with which religions extolled the "sweat of the brow" was even so convincing to the general populace that it served admirably as a method of preemption by the cunning, who could harness this deep piety for their private ends. Finding people ethically prepared to respect themselves and one another for their toiling, the cunning could manipulate this obedience for individual gain. Yet the fact remains that the "exploited" often seem to have had a better time of it than the "exploiter," for to be ethical is a deeply contenting thing. This may in part explain the fact that so much genuine folk culture has arisen out of unfair circumstances—or that it is precisely the descendants of slaves who, as a race in America, have been most given to song.

In its secular trappings, the respect for the ethics of work may be seen in the American's deep devotion to his business, or in the Marxian cult of the proletariat as the bearer of the new ethics. Again, we have such notions as John Dewey's concept of the "occupational psychosis," his thesis that a society's patterns of thought are shaped by the patterns of livelihood, that "spiritual" values get their authority because they reinforce the ways of thinking and feeling by which man equips himself to accomplish the tasks indigenous to his environment. The entire Darwinian point of view, in fact, emphasizes the growth of moral systems out of practical needs, the ways of "survival," and in human societies these ways of survival are fundamentally methods of producing and distributing goods.

Hence, in either naturalistic or transcendental thought we find the same tendency to accept an integral relationship between work and ethics.

2. The ethical values of work are in its application of the competitive equipment to cooperative ends.

Recall the symbol of the "Village Blacksmith." What is so "ennobling" about this man? Or Whitman's symbol of the broad-ax. It is in the fact that the basically destructive equipment, the military weapons of the body, are here used not to plague mankind but in social service. Such figures are "ethical" because they represent a fusion of the combative and the charitable. By work, the muscular and mental endowments which originally made for survival by the destruction of competitors are turned wholly into the channels of the cooperative. Work thus fuses the two aspects of the ethical: morals-as-implements, or morals-as-fists, and morals-as-social-cohesion. In the psychology of service the individually competitive capacities are sublimated into a cooperative enterprise. It has been suggested that the primitive group dance is so highly satisfying "ethically" because it is a faithful replica of this same cooperative fusion. It permits a gratifying amount of muscular and mental self-assertion to the individual as regards his own particular contribution to the entire performance, while at the same time it flatly involves him in a *group* activity, a process of giving and receiving.

3. Under capitalism this basic integration between work-patterns and ethical patterns is constantly in jeopardy, and even frequently impossible.

By far the most valuable work by Thorstein Veblen was his "Theory of Business Enterprise." Here he reminds us that we tend to take "business" and "industry" as synonymous, whereas they are fundamentally distinct. Throughout the recent depression our financial Genghis Khans have managed again and again to uphold and strengthen this confusion. We must worry ourselves as to "what is good for business," rather than ask the more fundamental question, "What is business good for?" And the trick whereby our people so spontaneously ask themselves the first of these questions rather than the second lies precisely in the capitalistic assumption that business and industry are synonymous. Veblen shows that, far from being synonymous, they can often be radically at odds. It is considerations of *business,* not of *industry,* which keep our productive plant in a state of partial paralysis today.

But the objection to capitalism does not stop at the interference with our work-patterns, and the consequent decay of morals and morale, which it offers in times of depression. The profit motive is equally suspect under conditions of prosperity. By its emphasis upon the competitive aspect of work as against the cooperative aspect of work, it runs counter to the very conditions by which the combative equipment of man is made ethical—or social. It tends to leave man's capacities for "force and fraud" too purely capacities for force and fraud. Hence it is no accident that the racketeer and the crooked promoter-director have arisen as the culmination of our business philosophy. ("You'd do the same thing if you were in his place." Imagine trying to get a morality out of that!) Racketeers and promoters are frequently put forward as preying upon "legitimate business," but as a matter of fact they are the logical conclusion of business's failure to provide adequate charitable outlets for the combative man. (The tendency has usually been manifested compensatorily in the "philanthropic" activities by which the predatory frequently attempt to convert the fruits of their conquests back into social services. But this makes two antithetical stages of a process which is morally sound only when it is synthetic. It is not moral to seize and give back—it is moral to convert the act-of-seizure itself into an act of public benefit.)

How can people go on publishing reports as to the many billions of dollars a year which racketeers cost "business" without taking the next obvious step, and noting how many more billions of dollars a year "business" costs "industry"? And how can they fail to note that in industry alone is the competitive ability, the muscle and mind of man, given a wholly cooperative fusion? Business, to be "moral," would be nothing more or less than the distributive end of industry. In so far as it is not this, it is vowed to a fundamental moral decay.

The church, ever acquiescent to the advantages of the hour despite its underlying philosophy of the Immutable, has of course stressed the aspects of its doctrine which seem to corroborate the fabulous acquisition and retention of private gain. Hence it has largely been the naturalists, the scientific skeptics, who have contributed to the distrust of the commercial ethic. But it must be recalled that the entire commercial exaltation was developed in opposition to the church's deepest teachings. If the Communists cared to do so, they could find many astonishing parallels between their own doctrines, which come at the end of the commercial upswing, and the church doctrines, which began to pale at its beginning. And even the Rotarians at the height of the New Era felt the profound moral need of a *cooperative* philosophy, precisely at the time when the drive to sell one's full quota, to put one's rival agents out of business, was at its psychotically intensest. The back-slapping of Babbitt was a hollow performance, but it represented a profoundly honest yearning.

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It attempted to do by a sheer ritual act, after hours, what one's entire efforts during the day were necessarily straining to deny.

4. Such a frustration of the combative-cooperative fusion under capitalism is a grave stimulus to wars.

If the cooperative genius is fundamentally frustrated or vitiated in civil life, men are still "moral" enough, still alive enough to the feeling that in *working together* lies virtue, for war to recommend itself to them in its best guise. War *is* cultural. It *does* promote a highly cooperative spirit. The sharing of a common danger, the emphasis upon sacrifice, risk, companionship, the strong sense of being in a unifying enterprise—all these qualities are highly *moral,* and in so far as the conditions of capitalistic peace tend to inhibit such expressions, it is possible that the thought of war comes as a "purgation," a "cleansing by fire." If the function of work fuses morals-as-implements or morals-as-fists with morals-as-social-cohesion, this same fusion is performed by war. Hence it seems natural that any radical impairment of this fusion under conditions of peace would instigate the search for a similar fusion in war, where it can indeed be attained. The non-professional character of modern war, the fact that the entire populations, even unto the gentle old ladies, contribute so avidly to its maintenance, would seem to indicate that it does satisfy deep emotional need. It is natural that, when the cooperative patterns are vitiated in peace, the moment war is declared it is found to be an "adequate" emotional solution to the difficulty, since it promptly brings the cooperative genius to the fore. Of course there are the profiteers who approach the entire matter from the standpoint of their private gain. But I doubt whether the ghoulish delights of this group could account for the exaltation of the people as a whole. It is the moral side of war which draws them to it, the fact that it brings their group together, if only for the dismal purpose of slaughtering or oppressing a common foe.

5. "Pure" art tends to promote a state of acceptance.

The group dance, as previously described, would seem to be a case in point. It carries the social patterns into their corresponding "imaginative" pattern, hence tends to substantiate or corroborate these patterns. The aesthetic act here maintains precisely the kind of thinking and feeling and behaving that reinforces the communal productive and distributive act. Or, to consider the question of tragedy, we may accept in a general way the psychoanalytic thesis, backed by such critics as Aristotle, that the tragedy makes for a state of resignation, or acceptance. By the psychoanalytic thesis this state of resignation is produced through fusing, in aesthetic symbols, mental conflicts which cannot be fused in the practical sphere. The maintaining of a strict family pattern, for instance, gives rise to certain proscriptions or taboos which conflict with desires arising out of the same pattern. One could not practically destroy these taboos without breaking up the family pattern. Hence, by symbolic fusion in tragedy, an ability to "accept one's fate" is established. This, in a general way, is the explanation of the "catharsis" of tragedy, which is the essence of "pure" art. It enables us to "resign" ourselves by resolving in aesthetic fusion trends or yearnings not resolvable in the practical sphere. And this same tendency to promote acceptance is to be seen likewise in "pure" humor. Pure humor is not protestant but acquiescent. It enables us to accept our dilemmas by belittlement, by "humanization." A good humorist does not want to "make us go out and do something about it." Rather, he makes us feel, "Well, things may not be so bad after all. It all depends on how you look at them."

6. "Pure" art is safest only when the underlying moral system is sound.

Since pure art makes for acceptance, it tends to become a social menace in so far as it assists us in tolerating the intolerable. And if it leads us to a state of acquiescence at a time when the very basis of moral integration is in question, we get a paradox whereby the soundest adjunct to ethics, the aesthetic, threatens to uphold an unethical condition. For this reason it seems that under conditions of competitive capitalism there must necessarily be a large *corrective* or *propaganda* element in art. Art cannot safely confine itself to merely *using* the values which arise out of a given social texture and integrating their conflicts, as the soundest, "purest" art will do. It must have a definite hortatory function, an element of suasion or inducement of the educational variety; it must be partially *forensic.* Such a quality we consider to be the essential work of propaganda. Hence we feel that the moral breach arising out of capitalist vitiation of the work-patterns calls for a propaganda art. And incidentally, our distinction as so stated should make it apparent that much of the so-called "pure" art of the nineteenth century was of a pronouncedly propagandist or corrective coloring. In proportion as the conditions of economic warfare grew in intensity throughout the "century of progress," and the church proper gradually adapted its doctrines to serve merely the protection of private gain and the upholding of manipulated law, the "priestly" function was carried on by the "secular" poets, often avowedly agnostic.

7. Our thesis is by no means intended to imply that "pure" or "acquiescent" art should be abandoned.

There are two kinds of "toleration." Even if a given state of affairs is found, on intellectualistic grounds, to be intolerable, the fact remains that as long as it is with us we must more or less contrive to "tolerate" it. Even though we might prefer to alter radically the present structure of production and distribution through the profit motive, the fact remains that we cannot so alter it forthwith. Hence, along with our efforts to alter it, must go the demand for an imaginative equipment that helps to make it tolerable while it lasts. Much of the "pure" or "acquiescent" art of today serves this invaluable psychological end. For this reason the great popular comedians or handsome movie stars are rightly the idols of the people. Likewise the literature of sentimentality, however annoying and self-deceptive it may seem to the hardened "intellectual," is following in a direction basically so sound that one might wish more of our pretentious authors were attempting to do the same thing more pretentiously. On the other hand, much of the harsh literature now being turned out in the name of the "proletariat" seems inadequate on either count. It is questionable as propaganda, since it shows us so little of the qualities in mankind worth saving. And it is questionable as "pure" art, since by substituting a cult of disaster for a cult of amenities it "promotes our acquiescence" to sheer dismalness. Too often, alas, it serves as a mere device whereby the neuroses of the decaying bourgois structure are simply transferred to the symbols of workingmen. Perhaps more of Dickens is needed, even at the risk of excessive tearfulness.

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In the Driftway

THE Drifter has nothing to add to the furious controversy which he so innocently started by listing the books he had not read. But another thought occurred to him when he put down the paper this morning after reading it. Since it is manifestly impossible for anyone but a copy-reader or a compositor who earns his living thereby to read every word in a metropolitan newspaper, what had he, the Drifter, an old newspaper reader himself, skipped? He went back to the paper to find out. He had read every word on the front page which described the recent San José lynching and had registered appropriate indignation at Governor Rolph's remarks; he read the story about the Scottsboro trial and the one which described the sentencing of Mr. Kresel. He read most of Father Coughlin's speech, and he noted the fact, without reading the article, that thirty-eight Columbia economists had expressed their disapproval of the President's monetary policy. This left unread on the front page a few items about a police dog, about Mrs. William K. Dick's marriage to an Italian boxer, and—what is doubtless more reprehensible—the report of the signing of the film and distillery codes under the NRA.

* * * * *

WHEN he turned to the inside of the paper, the Drifter found that he read less. Aside from the doings of the Wynekoop family of Chicago, he passed over pages 2 and 3. But he passed over also Waxey Gorden's trial on page 4, showing that he is not exclusively concerned with criminals. On page 5 he read all that was printed of Virginia Price's testimony at the Alabama trial. Pages 6 and 7 had to do with liquor control in its various aspects. The Drifter did not read them. Pages 8 and 9 contained foreign news, and of this he read beyond the headlines only the story about the Nazi Christians shutting the Evangelical cathedral in Berlin to critics of the Hitler regime. Whether from disillusionment or ennui he ignored stories about the Chinese war, British cruisers, Colonel Lindbergh, Italian cruisers, and a session of the World Wheat Commission. By page 10 front-page stories had begun to be carried over, so the Drifter really didn't settle down to new matter before he came to the dramatic reviews and the book page.

* * * * *

THE Drifter does not pretend to know exactly what this means about his intellectual capacities, but he is vain enough—or modest enough—to believe that it is not untypical. It is evident that he, as a newspaper reader, is concerned with what is ordinarily called human interest; that he is still enough of a liberal and a reformer to burn at certain kinds of injustice; that he keeps roughly *au courant* with what is happening in Washington but is more careful about the latest books, plays, and comments from the columnists. He is fairly sure to follow a murder case. This probably means that he is an unregenerate moron, and it will be just as well if his employers do not see these remarks. Indeed, since they obviously read only what is uplifting and/or important, it is unlikely that they will.

THE DRIFTER

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Holiday Book Section

Conclusion

By LINCOLN REIS

Now I have had you in my heart,
I will hasten intensity with speech,
With this rhetorical passion I will reform
Acquaintance into love. But you
With eyes absent, gaze ignoring glance,
Disdain deliberation. Must I then
Continue to create, and sense denied,
Embrace with a phrase you who have become
Galatea warm in fancy. Or is it the word
Which compels desire into silence,
Silence one with extinction. And your preference
Retreat to contact, shape that would alter shape;
Your pleasure, defect of argument.
Here where our bodies touch, this is the end
Of my endeavor, it is my soul's conclusion.

A Poem Is a Poem

MR. T. S. Eliot is, in part at least, the creation of his disciples. In their minds he stands for something which ought to exist and which, to be sure, he sometimes suggests. But I, at least, have always felt a certain disappointment when I have sought in his critical writings precisely what I had been assured one would find there and there only. At moments he is brilliantly suggestive. No other contemporary critic has more boldly and more successfully challenged the current platitudes about poetry, and none perhaps has provoked a more significant questioning of just these platitudes. But to me it seems that one will look in vain for something to which his more abject admirers seem to be always referring—namely, a complete, original, definite, and logically formulated body of doctrine.

Certainly one will not find it in the lectures* which he delivered under the auspices of the Norton Professorship at Harvard. Perhaps he felt that something academic would be expected of him and perhaps for that reason he cast his discourse in the form of a commentary upon the various ideas of poetry expressed by the great English critics from Sir Philip Sidney to I. A. Richards. But whatever the reason, the result is a series of all too academic lectures punctuated here and there with arresting remarks which make the reader wish that almost any one of them had been made the theme of a chapter or a volume instead of being allowed merely to bob up here and there and then to be lost again under the flood of a far less interesting discourse. I found myself skimming rapidly over the commonplaces of literary history and marking in the margin all the author's expressions of his own opinion. Then I attempted to put these opinions together, and when I had done so, I found, still further, that they seemed far less revolutionary, uncompromising, and final than I had expected them to be.

> Criticism, of course, never does find out what poetry is, in the sense of arriving at an adequate definition . . . nor can criticism ever arrive at any final appraisal of poetry. . . . Even the most accomplished of critics can, in the end, only point to the poetry which seems to him the real thing. . . . "Pure" artistic appreciation is to my thinking only an ideal, when not merely a figment. . . . The reason why some criticism is good (I do not care to generalize here about all criticism) is that the critic assumes, in a way, the personality of the author whom he criticizes, and through this personality is able to speak with his own voice.

With all this I must readily and completely agree, but I am distressed, nevertheless, for the simple reason that it seems dangerously close to an aquiescence in that relativism, that impressionism, and that slough of merely personal tastes and merely idiosyncratic reactions from which Mr. Eliot's disciples (though not, perhaps, Mr. Eliot himself) have suggested that he was born to save us. I find no standards, no ultimate objectivity, there. A good poem is a poem that seems good to a man of good taste. A good critic is a critic who assumes the personality of the author criticized. The appreciation of "pure poetry"—poetry which is merely poetry and not interesting for some extraneous reason also— is "only an ideal" when it is "not merely a figment." "Each age demands different things from poetry. . . . So our criticism, from age to age, will reflect the things that the age demands." Mr. Eliot, to be sure, does add a warning: "Amongst all these demands from poetry and responses to it there is always some element in common, just as there are standards of good and bad writing independent of what any one of us happens to like and dislike." He does not, however, explain how in practice these standards are to be discovered or agreed upon, and if to believe no more than this is to become "a classicist in literature," then I expect to discover that I am also "a royalist in politics and an Anglo-Catholic in religion."

By far the most interesting of the lectures is that devoted to The Modern Mind. In the course of it Mr. Eliot very suavely achieves the difficult task of expressing a contemptuous disagreement with I. A. Richards, while maintaining at the same time the polite fiction that he has for his antagonist a respect very near to awe. Mr. Richards, it will be remembered, has suggested that poetry can become a substitute for religion and as such "save mankind." To this Mr. Eliot protests in the names of both poetry and religion. Nothing is or can be a substitute for anything else. As Miss Stein (who is not cited) has said, "A rose is a rose is a rose." And this brings us back to the most original and significant of all Mr. Eliot's contentions, which is simply that a poem is a poem is a poem. You may define it as "communication" if you like, but you must remember that the thing communicated is not, as is sometimes rashly assumed, the experience which generated the poem but something quite different—namely, the poem itself.

Probably no contemporary critic has said anything more simply or richly suggestive than this. It cuts cleanly through a great deal of the dreadful nonsense of which all schools from the most decadently romantic to the most austerely Marxian are frequently guilty. But it does not, after all, take us very far; it does not answer the real question, which is simply this: How, then, does the experience of a poem differ from the experience afforded by a thought or an emo-

* "The Use of Poetry." By T. S. Eliot. Harvard University Press. $2.

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tion; what are the characteristics of a genuinely aesthetic experience? Surely it is not quite enough, though it may be very useful, to say what a poem is not. Surely the function of criticism is not merely that of preventing the student from giving wrong answers to the questions which it raises. And yet if it is actually to do more it must make some effort, however tentative, to say what a poem is as well as what it isn't. But perhaps Mr. Eliot intends as a theologian to devote himself more seriously to this problem. From Jacques Maritain he quotes the following sentence: "The unconcealed and palpable influence of the devil on an important part of contemporary literature is one of the most significant phenomena of the history of our time." To this Mr. Eliot adds in a footnote (whether humorously or not I do not know): "With the influence of the devil on contemporary literature I shall be concerned in more detail in another book."

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

American Literature: Pre-War

The Cambridge History of American Literature. Edited by William Peterfield Trent, John Erskine, the late Stuart P. Sherman, and Carl Van Doren. The Macmillan Company. Three volumes. $4.

THE past twenty years are so important to American literature that the "Cambridge History," now reissued in three volumes, has the look of a historical document. The publishers, without benefit of the editors, who long ago finished their task and were discharged from further responsibility or profit, have manhandled the work as if it were a classic. They have reduced the work from four volumes by omitting the bibliographies, the most valuable feature. Traces of the bibliographies, however, remain to tantalize. Footnotes refer to them on pages printed from the original plates. At the head of each index the reader is still told that it covers only the text and that he should consult the "proper section in the bibliographies" for further guidance. In the preface to the second volume, signed "The Editors," the publishers have made a self-conscious correction which makes no sense at all. Where the editors, in 1918, said that "the abundance of the material submitted, particularly for the bibliographies, led the publishers to extend the work," the publishers, over the signature of the editors, say that the extension was due to "the abundance of the material submitted and the importance of having the biography comprehensive and practically complete." The "biography" of the "Cambridge History" never pretended to be comprehensive or complete. The book was a history of the national literature written in collaboration by sixty-four scholars, with narrative and critical chapters assigned and arranged by the editors and with exhaustive lists, amounting to a third of the entire text, of books by and about the various writers under discussion. The reissue, however attractively printed and temptingly priced, and however convenient for the general reader, should not be confused with the original work, which was half again as long and many times more useful to thoroughgoing students.

The reduced version of the "Cambridge History" brings the record down little beyond 1900, and consequently has hardly anything to say about the second of the two most striking and influential periods in American literary history. Bare references are made to the names of Edwin Arlington Robinson, Theodore Dreiser (for his plays), Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg, Edgar Lee Masters, Vachel Lindsay, and none at all to James Branch Cabell, Sinclair Lewis, H. L. Mencken, Ring Lardner, Eugene O'Neill, Elinor Wylie, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Willa Cather, Ernest Hemingway, T. S. Eliot, Robinson Jeffers, John Dos Passos, E. E. Cummings. Most of these were unknown or obscure when the work was planned, and all of them were living. It was a policy of the editors to deal with living writers only when they had written notable books before 1900. In 1933 this seems too wide a margin of safety. It must be remembered that the "Cambridge History," though published between 1917 and 1921, was actually outlined in 1913. It was possible to take slight account of the literary activity which went on while the undertaking was in progress, for if the survey was to be systematic it had to be made from the point of view of a definite moment. That moment was the year or two just before the World War, when such impressive figures as Mark Twain, Henry James, and William Dean Howells either had died or had established themselves, with no successors immediately in sight. It was a breathing-spell between literary periods and in fact an excellent occasion for historical reckoning.

There can be no just complaint against the "Cambridge History" that it neglects what happened after it was written. The contributors were historians not prophets. It must be judged for its treatment of the matters it concerned itself with. The treatment was academic, if not professorial. All but ten of the contributors held some sort of university or college post, and none of them was anything but generally conservative in his estimates. Much of the responsibility for this special cast of the work rests with the editors. Whatever their subsequent occupations, they were at the time professors and perhaps inevitably chose others to work with them. Even if they had been disposed to range further they would have found fewer competent critics and historians outside academic circles in 1913 than they might find in 1933. Literary criticism, and incidentally literary biography and literary history, had not then become the issue which it became in the United States during the next two decades, when a new school of writers fought for recognition and in their fight went drastically over the claims of their elders. American criticism in 1913 had for years met few current native books worth making a stir about, and no vigorous literary groups or tendencies. The great writers were dead, their works collected, their lives recounted in official biographies. It is always the habit of academic persons to ask, rhetorically and contemptuously, what new books can be compared to old. In 1913 there were not many good American answers to make to the question. American literature was in academic hands because it was, temporarily, an academic matter.

The academic critics of the "Cambridge History" were generally sound antiquarians, scrupulous about dates and places and titles and biographical details, laborious in the compilation of the bibliographies, which were thought of as indispensable supplements to the narrative chapters. But they, directed by the editors, took it for granted that writers who had been conspicuous in their own days should on the whole remain equally conspicuous in the historical record, without too much revision of their standing on the stricter grounds of merit. Irving, Bryant, Longfellow, Whittier, Lowell, Lanier, and Webster were given, roughly, each as much space and emphasis as Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Poe, Lincoln, Whitman, and Mark Twain. At the same time, Emily Dickinson was tucked away in an omnibus chapter with the conclusion that "her place in American letters will be inconspicuous but secure," and Herman Melville was lumped among the contemporaries of Fenimore Cooper as if he were no more distinguished than Charles Brockden Brown or William Gilmore Simms. Nobody in the "Cambridge History" seems to have foreguessed the large change of opinion that was to come respecting Emily Dickinson and Melville, although it is true that this study of Melville turned out to be a pioneer step toward the complete revaluation of his work. It is true, too, that the non-academic estimates of those pre-war years were no more farsighted.

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The "Cambridge History" accomplished a good deal of academic pioneering. It reduced to more or less correct proportions the space devoted to colonial writers. Its surveys, in continued chapters, of the travelers and explorers, the historians, the divines and preachers, the philosophers, the newspapers, the political writers, the smaller poets and novelists and essayists, and the drama were first-hand investigations and have been the basis of most later research. It paid unprecedented attention to American writings in other languages than English, to the floating literature of oral songs and ballads, and to the American popular bibles which had been the gospels of native religions. (The present issue, of course, contains the modified chapter on the "Book of Mormon" and "Science and Health" which the original publishers put in the place of the dashing account written by Woodbridge Riley for the editors.) In all such matters the editors and contributors were on the natural ground of academic critics. For it is the minor writers of a nation who, when they have once ended their careers, belong to the past and stay there. The major writers, full of a life which does not end with the life of their bodies, go on growing and changing under the eyes of each new generation, and each new generation must reinterpret them. They are a part of the present. No chronicle can fix them in their places. The best literary histories, except when they deal with historical figures which are inert from being minor, must be discounted. The "Cambridge History," for all its virtues, is the pre-war history of pre-war American literature.

CARL VAN DOREN

Portraits of the Renaissance

The Man of the Renaissance. By Ralph Roeder. The Viking Press. $3.50.

THIS book had "clicked" with the American public even before the formal date of its publication, and it is not hard to see why. Mr. Roeder has matured as an artist even since the day of his "Savonarola," which was itself a distinguished piece of literature. His "Man of the Renaissance" shows the perfection of a vigorous, incisive style and the perfection also of a narrative method. His language is the language that Americans use when they have something to say and are not thinking of the requirements of some vicar's tea party in England. At the same time it is conscious of all the resources of the English language, and is rich, elegant, diversified. Mr. Roeder's style would not be so exciting had he not penetrated his subject so completely that it is alive in his hands. He knows his people intimately, sympathetically, and in detail. In each of the countless situations in his story, be they large or small, he is awake to all the resonances that are there. He reacts as his characters react, as he would have done in their places. And all that lends extraordinary vividness and convincingness to his narrative. The chapters on Castiglione and Aretino are a delight to any reader, and of the long series of portraits, comments, essays which those individuals, and others of that fascinating company of Cinquecentists, have inspired, they would probably recognize these of Mr. Roeder as the most lifelike.

When, however, the critic has paid deserved tribute to the literary merits of a work of this type, he can sit back with a sense of having done his full duty. "Biography" and "history" as they are practiced de facto by our literary artists are genres that have no substantial *raison d'être*. These literary biographers and historians are not interested in collecting facts—the facts have been collected with all the patience and expense and anonymity that that task involves, by others, and the discoverers for the most part are not even mentioned in these literary "rewarmings." Nor are the problems of historical interpretation either posed or solved. More often the literary man is not even aware of their existence, or of the methods by which the solutions are to be obtained. That is the case both from the intrinsic standpoint of what the Renaissance, let us say, was like in itself, what forces actually produced the phenomena these artists so vividly describe, and from the extrinsic standpoint of us who look back upon that period from this year 1933, and may legitimately ask what meaning it must have for us today, what judgment in the light of four hundred years of experienced history we are to pass upon it. In all that the literary man is uninterested, since by choice and mental habit he confines himself to individuals and periods which have, to steal one of Pareto's phrases, a high anecdotic index. This literature falls under the law of the anecdote, which may be retold more or less vividly, more or less well, the value of it depending on whether one has or has not heard it before.

One could illustrate these points from almost any page of Mr. Roeder's book. I will mention one example. In his Section 25 (p. 213) Mr. Roeder repeats, who knows over how many intermediaries, Taine's celebrated theory of the position of the courtier aristocracy in France in the seventeenth century. But he applies it to the Italian gentry of the sixteenth century, where, if it applies at all, it applies only with a thousand modifications or adaptations, and the implications at any rate are far different. I will mention another. Mr. Roeder thinks Alexander VI was "oversexed." How can we measure the point at which one man is normally sexed, and some other man oversexed? Is a Catholic Pope with five children less or more sexed than a Protestant pastor with eighteen? Or would Pope Borgia, who revoked the prohibition on concubinage in Rome, be more or less "sexed" than Savonarola, who could scarcely talk half an hour without an allusion to the "whore of Babylon" or some other form of "corruption"? And in the doubt why bother with the sex question at all? This error is fundamental. For it is not only that in this particular case Mr. Roeder, repeating an echo of the old Reformation propaganda, robs Alexander to credit Julius with a conception of the temporal grandeur of the church which Alexander created and realized and Julius merely inherited. It affects our whole interpretation of the Renaissance. For in that burst of energy in so many people in the first quarter of the sixteenth century in Italy are we to see supermen asserting themselves against normal restraints, or normal individuals acting under peculiar circumstances of weakened restraints; and if the latter, what were those circumstances and how did they arise? It makes better literature to talk about some theory of the "free play of instinct"—which, however, was quite as conspicuous in the Merovingians of the eighth century as in the Borgias of the Renaissance. It makes better history to think of the men of the Renaissance as normal men.

Mr. Roeder's narrative method works very well for Aretino, and possibly for Castiglione. It works not so well for Machiavelli and Savonarola. Machiavelli's greatness is scientific. He cannot be reduced to wit or anecdote without being minimized. And conversely Savonarola cannot be fictionized and sentimentalized without being made too important. Savonarola uttered never a word of which an intelligent man can make either head or tail. From the intrinsic standpoint of Renaissance history, he symbolizes in spirit exactly what the Inquisition represented in the fact, and one cannot consistently sentimentalize Savonarola without sentimentalizing the Inquisition, or condemn the Inquisition without condemning Savonarola—the triumphant Savonarola, I mean, for in the moment of disaster he was just one more unfortunate to succumb to the perennial brutality of men.

If Mr. Roeder's publishers have made a handsome edition of his spirited text, they have seriously marred it in one respect. Of the many Latin quotations in this book hardly one is correctly printed, and most of them are translated in footnotes with incredible inadequacy.

ARTHUR LIVINGSTON

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Lloyd George's Own Account

The War Memoirs of David Lloyd George, 1914-1916. Little, Brown and Company. Two volumes. $4 each.

LLOYD GEORGE'S "War Memoirs" are of first-rate importance. They are the frank, fighting, picturesque report of a foremost dynamic official who went right through the whole terrible struggle, from the declaration of war to the signing of the peace. They pulsate with the same driving energy, the same lack of respect for persons and traditions, and the same single-hearted determination to win the war that characterized all his efforts and brought him to the supreme direction of the British Empire. He never lets the reader forget what a determining and successful influence he exerted on the course of events—*quorum pars magna fui,* he might well have written. But at the same time he adds very materially to our knowledge of war history by the inclusion of numerous documents (which are never allowed to clog the story) and by clarifying the personal attitudes of himself and others on much-disputed episodes.

Lloyd George's Memoirs are a sharp contrast to those of his colleague, Sir Edward Grey. They lack the irenic spirit, the frank admission of errors in judgment, the gentleness of mind which preferred the solitude of forest and stream to the heat and dust of the fray in Grey's apologia. Lloyd George has nothing to apologize for. He is sure he was right, and he tells you so. He says in his preface that he had almost decided to bequeath his papers to a biographer, when an illness released him "from the irksome and peculiarly thankless duty of leadership in a political party unhappily poisoned and paralyzed by internal dissension amongst its better-known members." Fortunately, this release made him change his mind. For while the career of most other war statesmen has been fairly clear and consistent, the agile Welshman dashed at various policies with such acrobatic ease that it is peculiarly desirable that he should give his own elucidation.

The first volume begins with The Brewing of the Storm, and ends with The Serbian Tragedy at the close of 1915. Going back to 1904, when Englishmen were rejoicing over the announcement of the Anglo-French Entente, Lloyd George recalls how Lord Rosebery remarked to him prophetically: "You are all wrong. It means war with Germany in the end!" His own famous Mansion House speech of 1911, which marked another long step forward in Anglo-German tension, we now learn definitely was due to himself alone, both in origin and in wording. In his swift account of the way "the nations backed their machinery over the precipice" in July, 1914, there are many errors, betraying even today a rather muddled view of what really took place. He admits "the impression left on my mind is one of utter chaos, confusion, feebleness, and futility, especially of a stubborn refusal to look at the rapidly approaching cataclysm."

But one should not judge Lloyd George by his account of the outbreak of the war. It is when he takes up the ensuing financial crisis and the fight to secure adequate munitions that he gets at once into his masterful stride, shows his clearness of vision, and convincingly sweeps his reader along with him. For nearly a year he incessantly called attention to the need of speeding up the supply of munitions. But red tape, stubborn tradition, and lack of vision in the War Department constantly blocked his efforts. Almost incredible are the examples he gives of the rigidity of the military mind, which was incapable of learning anything new from what was daily happening in France.

Finally, however, in May, 1915, on the formation of the Coalition Government, Lloyd George was made Minister of Munitions. Then things began to hum. Though the War

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Department had scoffed at the idea of tanks, he went ahead and made them along lines suggested by the navy! Similarly, trench mortars and machine-guns were produced, of different design and in far greater quantities than the War Department at first approved. The following figures are typical of what he accomplished. The output of grenades from August, 1914, to June, 1915, was 68,000; during the following year the new Minister of Munitions increased it to 27,000,000. Shell production rose from 2,300,000 to 19,500,000. In July, 1916, the weekly output of howitzers was equivalent to the whole stock in existence at the beginning of the war. His vision in overstepping the barriers of military routine, inertia, and shortsightedness was more than justified by the actual experience of the later months of the war.

In the second volume Lloyd George deals sympathetically with the conflicting situation which President Wilson had to meet between the pro-Ally and anti-British currents of feeling. Wilson's peace moves he condemns to inevitable failure. He defends energetically his own "knock-out blow" interview with an American newspaperman as averting the danger of premature peace talk by which the Germans might have driven a dangerous wedge between the Allies.

Among the many difficulties he was called upon to deal with was the Irish Rebellion. Curiously enough, this saved his life. At Asquith's request he went to Dublin, instead of going, as he had intended, with Kitchener to Russia on the ill-fated Hampshire.

One of the most interesting chapters is the account of the Mesopotamian "muddle." Here again he gives almost incredible examples of the criminal lack of preparation on the part of the Indian civil and military authorities. The expedition allowed to go up to its doom at Kut-al-Amara had no proper transport, nor guns, nor food, nor medical supplies. Sorely wounded men with undressed putrifying wounds were jolted for days in springless army trucks, the only mattresses being the bodies of the dead lying under the bodies of those soon to die. Lloyd George picked out Sir John Gowans, who quickly put civilians at doing what the military men had failed to do.

Though his theme is of absorbing interest in itself, Lloyd George has heightened the interest by his picturesque style and by his penetrating analysis of the merits and defects of his colleagues—by giving full chapters to Kitchener and Sir William Robertson and several pages each to Grey, Asquith, Haldane, Carson, Balfour, and Bonar Law. His next two volumes, promised for next year and carrying the story through the Peace Conference, will be eagerly awaited.

SIDNEY B. FAY

Cast Out Remorse

The Winding Stair and Other Poems. By William Butler Yeats. The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

Collected Poems. By William Butler Yeats. The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

"THERE is," Yeats asserts, "for every man some one scene, some one adventure, some one picture that is the image of his secret life, for wisdom first speaks in images and . . . this one image, if he would but brood over it his whole life long, would lead his soul entangled, from unmeaning circumstance and the ebb and flow of the world, into that far household where the undying gods await all whose souls have become simple as flame, whose bodies have become quiet as an agate lamp." This one symbol is for Yeats, I believe, the beauty of the "uncontemplative" woman. And by "uncontemplative" Yeats means much the same thing as Eliot does when he speaks of the "peculiar honesty" of Blake—a kind of simple directness of vision which is inwardly disciplined. Most of Yeats's poetry might, in other words, be called love poetry. We know his story and the human reason for this. But the artist's use of love is what concerns us. The one image which links his earliest poetry with his latest is that of the beautiful woman, loved, lost, and always loved, even in her age and bitterness, until her image is irrevocably and imaginatively linked with those of the great legendary queens, the "ever-living." Yeats has said somewhere that he spent much of his life writing and rewriting "The Shadowy Waters" (1906). This narrative represents the search of the passionate soul for ever-living love. Though that search lead to death, it must be continued.

Now, other poets have used the image of a beautiful woman as the symbol of perfection—Dante and Shelley, to name only two. How, then, does Yeats's use differ? How did his choice of this symbol influence his unique development as a poet? Yeats's beautiful woman is never removed into a state of beatitude as was Beatrice. Nor is she sought from afar and ever pursued as was Shelley's. She suffers earthly change with all mortality, and yet is recreated in men's imaginations. She is eternal only because she has undergone, as the poet writing of her must undergo, all human experience, and because she will die. Ravaged and finally destroyed, her beauty is, nevertheless, always being recreated in thought and in art; therein it is linked with the loveliness of the legendary, therefrom it is projected into a concept of future perfection. There is proof in Yeats's own words, moreover, that it is this type of perfection he would interpret in his other frequently used symbol, the rose.

> I notice [he writes] that the quality symbolized as the Rose differs from the Intellectual Beauty of Shelley and of Spenser in that I have imagined it as suffering with man and not as something pursued and seen from afar. It must have been the thought of my generation.

This idea of change as the only way of conceiving life was, indeed, of Yeats's generation. It leads straight to the later adoption of the Bergsonian philosophy. But it does not, as does that philosophy, question the mind itself and therefore the imaginative mind's faith in the changeless. Change for Yeats seems rather to be the evolution—undergone in life—toward changelessness, which, believed in, may be achieved.

> What the world's million lips are thirsting for
> Must be substantial somewhere

Yeats says, through Forgael's lips, when that voyager, led by the birds with men's and women's heads, voyages alone toward ever-living love.

If the beautiful uncontemplative woman and the rose, then, are such images—really one and the same—as the poet may brood over his whole life, how must that poet live? Obviously, he too must accept his part of suffering and endurance. He must know every experience of change, repudiating none. With this symbol as medium for his vision and with "the colors of one's own climate and scenery in their right proportion" for his physical field of reference, Yeats has become the great poet he is, probably the greatest writing today in English.

The woman Yeats knew was not a dream woman. She lived. Yeats knew her in "the wild immortal loveliness sensed only in youth." He knew her later as the vessel of intellectual hatred, a bitter and violent leader of the poor in radical revolt—this, during Ireland's nationalistic rebellion against England. Apparently, if we can trust the poems, Yeats, himself a patriot, parted spiritually from her when she commanded violence, when what he felt to be an irrational bitterness became her chief weapon. The reason is clear enough. Maud Gonne's life and the lives of other men and women of action were too engrossing and, in a sense, too personal. Yeats, as a poet, knew that he needed isolation, time, detachment. He had to have in himself room for imaginative freedom. Therefore in prose he outlined

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the theory of the self and the anti-self, the rational and the intuitional, or subjective, mind. Therefore in poetry he retreated, for a time, from subjects related to Ireland. He felt that he must first search through his own emotions, intuitions, and ideas. He wanted to define the wisdom of his own mature years, to sum up his own imaginative broodings. Thus only would he perfect his poetic philosophy. At this point he came upon a new image, the tower, symbol of body decaying and of imaginative mind still intense but pointing toward darkness or oblivion. When he turned again to write of the "state," he applied to it this same tower image, this time reversing the image—the tower of the state dies at the top. So it was that Yeats reached, in his own life, the point where he must distinguish between the public man and the private artist. And at this point he seems to have found that he must take time from examining men and action to contemplate himself. There was, he felt, an antithesis between the active man and the poet. Only by going into his own imagination more deeply for a while could he resolve the inevitable conflict between reality and vision.

In Yeats's use of language this conflict *is* resolved. He keeps throughout his poetry the use of a fine poetic rhetoric, the artist's heritage from tradition. This imaginatively heightened language draws its actual images from the real scene or action described, in such a way as to give each poem an immediacy of feeling, a dramatic force. Yeats is almost always the dramatic lyricist. Each of his better poems throws the reader into the very center of an experience. None, except some very early verses, is of mood only. The greater poems show the poet at actual grips with his experience, in the very process of living through its intensity to its solution. And the solution has the impact of the dramatic action so concluded as to state an imaginatively profound truth. Truth is arrived at, usually, through suffering which remolds and recreates the poetic vision. Yeats, like all great poets, has a tragic sense of life. His wisdom is the heart's, chastened but not denied by the mind. By "passion" he means the vital recreative force in human life, disciplined always by thinking, but so charging the thought as to make it radiate afar. His poetic language is perfectly adapted to convey this sense of passion, heightened emotionally but never vague, since it fuses, in imagery, vision with actual physical scene.

All this could be made more concrete if there were space for quotation. Yeats has rewritten much of his early poetry. In every case the changes are good. And they are made always to bring his early work into agreement with his mature philosophy. A vague, dreamlike phrase gives place to an exact and sometimes harsh image. Melody is broken by rhythms more nervous and more dramatic. One can learn more about poetry by tracing through these revisions than by reading a dozen essays on the art. Yeats manages to keep the inimitable youthfulness of feeling characteristic of the early poems and at the same time so to alter them that they gain in dramatic immediacy. Often very slight revisions indicate the poet's complete change in thought. In "To His Heart, Bidding It Have No Fear," in the lines

> Him who trembles before the flame and the flood
> And the winds that blow through the starry ways,
> Let the starry winds and the flame and the flood
> Cover over and hide, for he has no part
> With the proud majestical multitude

we find the last line in the revision written "With the *lonely* majestical multitude." Again the early line "I tore it from the *green* boughs of Eire" becomes "I tore it from the *barren* boughs of Eire." Does this mean that, having taken the first progressive step, having believed in nationalism for Ireland, Yeats came to see that nationalism as "barren"? There are prose passages and poetic to prove that he could not see in either

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politics or religion the creation of minds with enough receptivity to become wise; many lines to indicate that he regretted the loss of traditional sanctity and loveliness and left future action to young upstanding men "bound neither to cause nor to state." Several passages describe even great men's lives as passing shadows, leaving behind naught but the image of beauty, the things of which man makes "a superhuman mirror-resembling dream." It is not certain then that for Yeats the necessities of the poet, the very dreams by which the poet's imagination must live, ever came into complete accord with the actual world. Nor were they likely to. Yeats, the last of the romantics, as he calls himself, but far greater than this alone, made a valiant struggle completely to reconcile social purpose with poetry. The poet's vision overleaped the facts. It was born very likely from the conflict between them and the poet's inner longing for the immortality of beauty. Yeats takes account of his own people and his people's affairs, refuses to repudiate them for any ivory tower, but must, nevertheless, find wisdom, finally, only in himself. In his poem "A Dialogue of Self and Soul" Yeats, the man and the artist, concludes:

> A living man is blind and drinks his drop.
> What matter if the ditches are impure?
> What matter if I live it all once more?

And then, going on to accept each phase of his own life, even the folly of wooing "a proud woman not kindred of his soul," finds that

> When such as I cast out remorse
> So great a sweetness flows into the breast
> We must laugh and we must sing,
> We are blest by everything,
> Everything we look upon is blest.

Thus it is that the poet who would base his vision on his own scene finds that, for himself at least, bitterness which fosters revenge or hatred must be cast out. It may motivate action, but it mars imaginative truth. EDA LOU WALTON

The Art of Lytton Strachey

Characters and Commentaries. By Lytton Strachey. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $3.

THESE "Characters and Commentaries" will be welcomed by lovers of Lytton Strachey as a penultimate legacy, for the preface suggests, though it does not say so, that there may be still another. They are mainly reviews and other papers contributed to periodicals, chronologically arranged in order to afford an opportunity for studying the development of the author's style from 1903 to 1931. But the development does not follow a straight line, and one is more likely to read for pure enjoyment than for a more pedantic purpose. The very pearl of the collection is one of Strachey's earliest writings, a series of chapters on English Letter Writers, never before published, which he wrote in 1905, while still at Cambridge, for a prize competition which after all did not take place. This is Strachey at his most perfect, a matchless combination of wit, fine perception, regret for the past, and exquisite prose. The middle section of the book, 1913 to 1918, is the most varied. A Victorian Critic, a devastating comment on Matthew Arnold, and French Poets Through Boston Eyes, an even completer devastation of Amy Lowell, illustrate Strachey's masterly use of quotation with high-spirited ruthlessness. A Diplomatist: Li Hung Chang and Bonga Bonga in Whitehall have a Swiftian irony, while Mr. Hardy's New Poems shows a profound appreciation of the ugly beauty and melancholy irony of Hardy's genius, so far removed from Strachey's own.

Strachey's fame, since it rose like a rocket with "Eminent Victorians," has undergone some vicissitudes. With "Queen

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Victoria" it soared even higher. But after that, if it did not come down like a stick, it at least floated like a feather on currents of varying altitude and warmth. It was discovered that he had faults, that his perceptions, though acute, were limited, that his irony sometimes degenerated into cheapness, that his rhetorical effects, so brilliant and sound at best, were trifling and irrelevant at worst, that he sacrificed truth to form, that he tended to appreciate the merely eccentric rather than the profoundly human, that he lacked emotion, that his method was so difficult, requiring such delicate balance and temper, that attempts to imitate it produced only caricatures, and that he sometimes caricatured it himself.

In all the criticism that Strachey's art evoked there is a good deal of truth. Yet he is far greater than the sum of this criticism implies. He understood Rousseau as well as Voltaire, Mademoiselle de Lespinasse as well as Madame du Deffand, Boswell as well as Horace Walpole. He was, it is true, no Boswell, no Froude. But he was something else, perhaps equally good. Like Johnson, he brought a trained critical intelligence to his art. His judgments will probably bear the test of time better. Like Boswell he recreated biography for his time. He brought to it a new vision and a new method which were so apposite and essential to the period that they have been assimilated even into the later biographic stream, which is no longer conscious of the assimilation but conscious only of a reaction against certain Stracheyan attitudes.

Strachey reacted with violence against all the cultural implications of Victorian England. He escaped from it first into seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France and became the English critic who best understood French literature. This has become almost a reproach, for there will always be something suspect about an Englishman who loves Racine even if he also loves Shakespeare. He felt more at home in Elizabethan and eighteenth-century England than in that of the nineteenth century. His form, as well as his point of view, was a reaction against Victorianism, "its incoherence, its pretentiousness, its incurable lack of detachment." It was "unaesthetic to its marrow bones," and "incapable of criticism." And yet it had a strange fascination for him, "like one of those queer fishes that one sees behind glass at an aquarium, before whose grotesque proportions and somber, menacing agilities one hardly knows whether to laugh or shudder." He both laughed and shuddered; perhaps he gave to biography a new shudder, with laughter in it, but it is a mistake to think that this laughter contains no emotion.

In reaction to the "two fat volumes" of Victorian eulogy he considered brevity and truth the first duties of the biographer. The truth he arrived at was a highly selected truth. All Strachey's main figures are stylized. But stylization may reveal truth, though in a different way from documentary realism, and abstraction may indicate relationships as clearly or more clearly than photographic detail. Strachey's irony, his selectiveness, his arrangement of material were all part of his method for arriving at truth, a method which he used, for the most part, with a beautiful virtuosity. His is an art which, like that of T. S. Eliot, presupposes a rather high degree of cultivation in the reader. Strachey's position, indeed, bears a marked similarity to Eliot's. Having been of great importance in reorienting the art in which he expressed himself, he seems suddenly to have ceased being important, because that part of his influence which will probably persist has already been absorbed by the contemporary tradition.

CLARA GRUENING STILLMAN

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Films

"The Invisible Man"

THERE are two very good reasons why the version of H. G. Wells's "Invisible Man" at the old Roxy is so much better than this sort of thing usually turns out to be on the screen. The first is that James Whale, who is responsible for the direction, has taken a great deal of pains with something that is usually either reduced to a minimum or altogether ignored in these attempts to dramatize the more far-fetched hypotheses of science—namely, setting. Ordinarily we are precipitated abruptly and without warning into the strange and violent world of the scientific romancer's imagination. We are given no time to make our adjustment to the logic of this new world which is so different from the world to which we are accustomed. The result is of course that we never truly believe in this new world: it is too abstract, too intellectually conceived, to take us in very successfully through our feelings. For this reason one is always tempted to lay down as a first principle for writers and directors dealing with the extraordinary the principle that to respond to the unusual we must first be reminded of the commonplace. And James Whale's success in observing the principle makes one more convinced than ever that it should be regarded as a general one. He begins with a carefully documented picture of a small country inn in England: the people, the furnishings, the whole atmosphere are not only instantly recognizable but also so particularized as to have an interest in and for themselves. The background is solidly blocked in so that we can have no uncertainty as to the reality of the people and the places with whom we have to deal. Everything is made ready for the invisible man to step in and perform his marvels.

Now the only problem for the director was to make the best possible use of his idea—an idea which happens to be ideally suited to the talking screen in so far as it is impossible to imagine it being equally well treated in any other medium. For the wretched scientist who has made himself invisible still has a voice. A body without a voice we have had on the silent screen, but not until this picture have we had a voice without a body. And in Wells's novel the sight of the printed words on the page cannot be so disturbingly eerie as the actual sound of Claude Rains's voice issuing from empty chairs and unoccupied rooms. The problem for Mr. Whale, then, was to miss none of the opportunities for humor, pathos, and metaphysical horror which this rare notion opened up to the sound-camera. How admirably he has succeeded it is impossible to indicate without reference to the numerous instances in which his ingenuity surprises our habitual sense-patterns. It will be enough to mention the books hurled through space by an invisible hand, the cigarette smoked by invisible lips, the indentation in the snow of the shattered but still invisible body. Also one must point to the effectiveness of not showing the visible features of the scientist until, in the last few feet of the film, death restores them to him. Of Claude Rains's richly suggestive voice it is not too much to say that it is hardly less responsible than the direction for the peculiar quality of the picture as a whole. The preternatural compound of Olympian merriment and human desolation which are its overtones lends a seriousness that would otherwise be lacking. But taken either as a technical exercise or as a sometimes profoundly moving retelling of the Frankenstein fable, "The Invisible Man" is one of the most rewarding of the recent films.

Pretty nearly everyone seems to be agreed that in "Duck Soup" (Rivoli) the four Marx brothers are not quite so amusing as in their earlier screen vehicles. Certainly Harpo, with his limited range of buffooneries, is becoming definitely tiresome; Groucho, who depends entirely on wisecracks, is badly provided for; and the other two brothers show less excuse than usual for their existence. The present story might have been shaped into a hilarious burlesque of dictatorship; but this would have amounted to humor with a point, and the essence of Marxian humor is its pointlessness. Like the whole "crazy-fool" humor of the post-war epoch, it consists in a dissociation of the faculties rather than a concentrated direction of them toward any particular object in the body social or politic. It may be that hysteria is less amusing than it once was—a luxury in which we can no longer afford to indulge. WILLIAM TROY

Drama

Why History?

WHEN Maxwell Anderson decided to write a play about Mary Stuart he must have been faced by a pair of simple alternatives. Whatever view he decided to take of her moral character, he still had to choose whether he would regard her primarily as a woman who happened to be a queen or primarily as a queen who happened to be a woman; and once that choice was made, the whole character of the drama was determined. For good or for ill he chose the first alternative, and "Mary of Scotland" (Alvin Theater) becomes, therefore, the romantic tragedy of a woman who loved and lost. In the lightly sketched background one does, to be sure, catch an occasional hint of the fact that the fate of empires is also at stake. In a few brief scenes John Knox thunders, and in two or three others the implacable Elizabeth discusses her policy with the bearded Lord Burleigh. But none of these things is more than a picturesque accessory, and Mary is before all a woman who made the mistake of refusing love when love was offered. She is innocent of any and all of the crimes which have been charged against her. The question of whether or not she was monstrously indifferent to the fate of a people upon whom she had been thrust hardly enters at all. But she is the victim of one of those moments of weakness which constitute what the ancients called a "tragic guilt." She is not true to herself when she chooses the weakling Darnley as her consort and by so doing loses the counsel and support of Lord Bothwell, whom she loves and who, alone, could have saved her. From the moment of that mistake her fate is sealed and no subsequent wisdom or fortitude can save her.

No one, I think, will care to deny that Mr. Anderson has written a rather effective play. It would, indeed, be easy to give it high praise and to point with justice to many scenes graced with a genuine eloquence and a touching pathos. Yet most spectators will wonder why they are never moved as they feel that they should be, and it is, I believe, rather the whole conception than anything in the execution which is fundamentally at fault. No one is likely to accuse me of being obsessed with the idea that any work of art must of necessity have its social implications. I happen to be interested in individuals far more than I am interested in "forces" or "movements," and I see no reason why the very greatest play should not be one which is concerned with the personal tragedy of a single individual. But as I watched "Mary of Scotland" unfold itself I could not but ask, "Why history?" To a story of the sort Mr. Anderson has to tell the associations inevitably connected with the struggle between Elizabeth and Mary are almost wholly irrelevant. No matter how hard he tries to keep them in the background, no matter how determined he seems to use

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them only to give weight and dignity to the characters, they get in the way. Mary's private tragedy cannot be detached from public affairs, and public affairs get no adequate recognition. This is not, one says to oneself, the story of Mary of Scotland, and why, one asks, should anyone pretend that it is?

Mr. Anderson, to be sure, has many precedents which are more than respectable. Aristotle believed that only kings and queens could have personal stories worth the telling, and Shakespeare's contemporaries had at least the feeling that robes and scepters were the only fitting adjuncts to a heroic character. That sense, however, we no longer have, and it is because Mr. Anderson counts so heavily upon it that his play cannot wholly shake off its slightly archaic air. The idea of kingship has lost its magic. Characters do not automatically grow in stature when a title is conferred upon them and the story of a broken heart does not seem more significant because that heart was filled with royal blood. Mary's story as a woman is no more than the story of any other woman her equal in intelligence or sensibility, and the trappings have become no more than merely trappings. There is one sort of significance which history has lost; Mr. Anderson has nothing to say of the sort it has retained.

As for the production, it is deserving of the same high praise which one might justly give to the actual writing of the play itself, for here again everything has been done to make the conception seem as effective as it can be made to seem. The Bothwell of Philip Merivale is dashingly romantic while remaining robust and virile. As Mary, Helen Hayes gives a performance marked by such dignity and poise that one must pause to admire not merely this individual performance but an actress who has, during the past few years, matured more than most of her fellows in a lifetime. Helen Menken, I think, is feeble as Elizabeth, but of the production as a whole one can say only what one would say of the play: it does everything possible to hide what proves in the end to remain plainly evident—the fact, that is, that "Mary of Scotland" is not a really successful modern play.

In "The Dark Tower" (Morosco Theater) the Messrs. George Kaufman and Alexander Woollcott have pooled without exactly combining their talents. The result is a somewhat portentous drama of sinister influences and dark crimes upon the troubled surface of which some of Mr. Kaufman's sprightly witticisms bob up and down with a gay irrelevance. The ponderous and creaking machinery of the drama does not help to render any more impressive the somewhat tall tale of a beautiful actress condemned to suffer mysterious indignities at the hands of an effeminate Svengali, and I doubt if the public can be persuaded to take its serious portions very seriously. There are a number of diverting moments of incidental by-play, but taken as a whole "The Dark Tower" remains thoroughly—though elegantly—phony.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

☐ JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH says ☐

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THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS. Avon Theater. Historical farce-comedy centering about the pleasant old New England custom of bundling. Spicy, impudent, and genuinely amusing.

THE SCHOOL FOR HUSBANDS. Empire Theater. Arthur Guiterman and Lawrence Langner make a picturesque and flippant adaptation of Molière's "The School for Husbands." There is much difference of opinion concerning its merits as entertainment but I found it charming and funny, as well as not too far from the spirit of the original author. With June Walker and Osgood Perkins.

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